

THE LEGEND OF IONA,

WITH

OTHER POEMS.

THE
LEGEND OF IONA,

WITH
OTHER POEMS.

BY
WALTER PATERSON,

*And where wee kenn somme ishaid floures besprent
We tak ytt, and from ould roustie do ytt clene.*

CHATTERTON.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by George Ramsay and Company,
FOR ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND COMPANY, EDINBURGH,
AND LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
LONDON.

1814.

TO
SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH, M. P.
&c. &c. &c.

AS AN EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE AND RESPECT,

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

BY HIS HUMBLE SERVANT,

WALTER PATERSON.

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ERRORS OF THE PRESS.

Love printed for *lore*, p. 194, v. 7.

Sme—ince printed for *me—since*, p. 216, penult line.

For printed for *far*, p. 257, v. 1.

The Stanza of the following Romance is formed from Mr Campbell's O'Connor's Child; with so much more variety as a Poem so much longer necessarily requires.

THE LEGEND OF IONA.

Canto First.

" An unforeseen and fatal hand
Crossed all the measures love had planned."

IOG AN



THE LEGEND OF IONA.

Canto First.

I.

Ir thou be one of a merry mood,
Tread not upon Iona's Isle,
For it will chill thy dancing blood,
And rob thee of thy rosy smile.
Then lie thee hence, thou merry swain,
And gaily rig thy bark for pleasure,
More winsome islands thou mayst gain,
Ere a short mile thou shalt measure;
For scattered in those seas they lie,
Like cloudlets on a summer sky,

So fair thou canst not tell the fairest ;—
Behind, before, on every side,
Their shadows haunt thee on the tide,
Where'er thy bark thou bearest.—
There is but one that to thy heart
Its blessedness may not impart.

II.

But, traveller of the land and seas,
If a pensive one thou be,
Whom sights and thoughts unearthly please,
Iona thou mayst see.
But be thy feet unshod the while,
Thy locks like a pilgrim's bare,
Ere thou mayst touch the holy Isle,
For the bones of saints lie there ;—
Fragments of many a Christian cross,
And ancient tomb-stones grey with moss,
And cloister ruins—wrecks sublime,
That tell to man the march of time.—

1\ Then, if one guilty thought thou hast,
O blessed soul ! that hour is its last,
For never from a spot so holy
May a soul like thine bear earthly folly.

III.

When thou art wandering over the Isle,
Like a pilgrim on Mount Calvary,
Musing on thy dear Christ the while,
And the faithful ones that round thee lie ;
And when upon the grey moss stones,
Thou lookest with a revering eye,
To see if thou canst tell the bones
That lie entombed so holily,
There is a stone so old and grey,
And sunk so far beneath the clay,
It seemeth to have lain for aye,
Upon that self-same ground ;
And there in letters rude and old,
Two Christian names thou mayst behold,
Of whom a melting tale is told,
When melting tales go round.

IV.

And oft the monuments among,
Or 'mid the cloister ruins grey,
The stranger hears their story sung—
For all do love to frame the lay.
An old man, with a head like snow,
Will sit him on a mossy stone,
And tune his voice to mingle wo
With melting pleasure's softer tone.
And blooming boys, and virgins mild,
At hearing of the lay so wild,
Will gather round the cloister walls,
And join their little madrigals ;
And well they watch the stranger's eye,
The workings of his heart to spy ;
And well they love the glittering dew,
That gathers while they sing so true.

V.

Sweet pastime is the Minstrel's art,
With gentle souls to play,

And mould at will the human heart
To pain or pleasure's sway ;
And ever to men's varying ears
To tune the varying measure ;
To quench their pleasure with their tears,
And dry their tears with pleasure.
The art is sweet—but how may I
With infant lay its perils try
In this melodious age, among
So many masters of the song ?—
The die is cast, and I must play,
My stake a cypress, or a bay :
Eager to win, or lose a name,
I sing for glory, or for shame.

VI.

Day with his yellow locks bedewed
In mellow evening's moistened air,
Far in the ocean's solitude
Had left a wandering pair.

Long on their path was his delay,
Slowly his parting ray withdrew,
Till night came o'er their watery way,
Glittering with stars and wet with dew.
And the moonshine on the silvery ocean
Lay floating in a playful motion,
Like to a robe of slender lawn
Over a virgin's bosom drawn.
And the jewels of the pearly tide
Joyfully danced on the vessel's side,
As if in sportive love's delight,
Enamoured of the beauteous freight.

VII.

As a young mother's heart is blest,
When with a loving eye she sees
The sinless nursling of her breast
Lie sleeping on her knees,—
Happy was the young mariner,
As he viewed his lovely bride,

Amid the ocean's constant stir,
Lie dreaming by his side.
And while he watched the snowy sail,
That dallied with the amorous gale,
Still, with the holiest looks of love,
He gazed upon his sleeping dove,
Watching, as if to be more blest,
The dreaming motions of her breast,
That seemed to tell of things to be,
And future love's felicity.

VIII.

On one so beautiful and dear
He would have gazed eternally,
And minded nought while she was near,
That was on earth or sea ;
But his earthly view, from sympathy,
In kindred dreams began to fail ;
While the little bark went merrily,
Steered by the tide and the gale.

Like twin babes in a cradle rocked,
With heart and soul together locked ;
The virgin pair with fancies blest,
Slumbered in visionary rest ;
While their dreaming souls together flew
To lands beyond a tyrant's view.—
But hark ! 'tis the keel on the yellow sand,
And the dreamers wake in the visioned land.

IX.

The inward motion of a bay
Had sucked them to its inmost wave,
Where the waters, in their gentle play,
The golden sands for ever lave ;
And aye unto those lonely cells
The beauties of the ocean bring,
And make among the silver shells
An everlasting murmuring.
Its banks, that wore a mingled 'hue
Of green and yellow, red and blue,

Ascended, 'mid the various die,
In swells and falls capriciously,
That here the goat might fear to stray,
And there the dreamer safely lay;
And ever through the long grass fell
The drippings of some crystal well.

X.

Like spirits that have past the strife,
And troubles of their earthly sea,
And rested on ^{*}the land of life,
That lies beyond mortality,
The wandering lovers, hand in hand,
Fell down upon that lonely shore,
And blessed it as a holy land
Where they should weep no more.
For moved with feelings new and strange,
Like those of nature's final change,
They felt their sorrows pass away,
Like mists that cannot bear the day,

Before the strong and pious bliss,
That moved their hearts to holiness ;
And Mary and her Christ they blessed
That they had found so sweet a rest.

XI.

It was a grotto wild and rude,
That haply once had been the dwelling
Of him who fares on the forest food,
And the waters from the fountain welling ;
When he took up his hermitage,
Far from the strife of men to fare,
And give to God and Christ his age,
Made sweet with the faith of prayer.
To other hermits now it gave
Repose, when he was in his grave ;
For they, like him, had come to dwell
Where they might drink the crystal well,
And eat the berries from the tree,
And suck the flower of the honey-bee ;

And with their hymns of love adore
The Spirit of the lonely shore.

XII.

And well to the lovers' present mood
Fitted the whispering of the waves,
The airy breath of the murmuring wood,
And the wildness of the ocean caves.
Yet for eternal solitude
The lonely seas they had not sailed,
Though lovingly they now reviewed
The silence that prevailed.
For still they thought how sweet it were
Communion with the good to share.
And the lady of holy men would tell,
Who lived in a land that she knew well.
And the chieftain knew a native isle,
Where gentle souls on his love would smile;
Yet now, and for many a night to be,
Well might they dwell in the caves of the sea.

XIII.

Among the grotto's silver shells

They made their bed of the blooming heather,
And sunk amid its purple bells
In innocence together.

While through the honeysuckles wild,
And the ivy curtains of the cave,
Like the song of a mother to her child,
Murmured the melting wave.

And mellowed with its murmurings
The whisper of the zephyr's wings,
That through the leafy forest fell
On the lovers' ears like a sleepy spell;
Till soothed into a dreaming death,
Their souls were melted into one,
Like the communion of their breath,
That ne'er could be undone.

XIV.

The wandering moon had run her race,
The orient blushed with rosy day,

And still on Helen's colouring face
The changing hues of slumber stray.
"Sleep on my love," her Owen sung,
"No evil thing can enter here,"
Then o'er his plaided shoulders flung
The quiver and the huntsman's spear.
Helen half raised her feeble eye,
And on him looked imploringly;
Softly, I ween, he soothed her then,
Till her weary lids fell down again,
Then gently stole him from her side
To search what fare the woods provide,
And soon return to wake his love,
And feast with her in the happy cove.

XV.

Vain thought ! Unblessed was the hour
In which his love was left alone;
For while she slumbered in her bower,
And half forgot that he was gone,

In silent wonder o'er her stood

A stranger clad in pilgrim's grey,
And long her lovely form reviewed,
As languidly in sleep she lay.

Her form he half could tell beneath
The blossoms of the blushing heath;
As round her bosom's dreaming beat
Alternately they part and meet;
And through the rosy locks that roved
Around her cheeks, as they were moved
By her light breath, he half could trace
The blushes of her blooming face.

XVI.

He would have gazed as mute as death,
With admiration and surprise,
But every movement of his breath
Seemed to disturb the dreamer's eyes;
For now her lids she half would lift,
As if she felt the stranger's gaze,

And o'er her face would seem to shift

The reddening colours of amaze.

And when her lids again would close,

Still broken seemed her soul's repose,

For, restless ever as a billow,

From cheek to cheek she changed her pillow ;

While through her ringlets' rosy shade

Her blushes deepened and decayed.—

“ Awake, fair maiden !” the pilgrim cries,

“ For cold on thy cheek the bright dew lies.”

XVII.

“ My lord ! my love !” replied the maid,

Like murmuring billows when they die,

As through a lock's bewildering shade

She raised her angel eye ;

But when it met the stranger's gaze,

She started back in mute amaze ;

Till soothing words redeemed her life,

That fluttered with a parting strife ;

And holy looks, and friendly fears
Her friendship claimed, and drew her tears.
For of the chance of wind, or wave,
That left her in so wild a cave,
The pilgrim questioned with an eye
So kind, it claimed a kind reply.
And though a virgin fear repressed
The freedom of her friendly breast,
So ill her heart could she disguise
From a pilgrim meek and hoary,
She wiped the dew-drop from her eyes,
And told him all her story.

XVIII.

“ In fair Iona’s holy isle,
A widow woman lived my mother,
She had but me to share her smile,
Her lost love left no other.
Of him, her hero, she would tell,
And make me sad to see her tears,

And sadder still for what befell

My father in his bloom of years ;
For treacherous was the secret sword
That robbed her of her gallant lord,—
The rivals of his love, they came
To hunt with him the forest game,
But ere a bugle roused a roe,
A hundred swords had laid him low ;
For he had baffled them in love,
When all for Ulva's heiress strove.

XIX.

“ And still they wooed, and still they strove
To win the mourner's widowed hand ;
And he who slew her gallant love
Was still among the hateful band.
To Isla's towers she fled with me,
And at a brother's threshold knelt,
But wicked heart of stone had he,
That nature's workings never felt.

For there the suitors wooed her still,
 And he that her lord's blood did spill,
 And favour found with Isla's chief,
 Till the widow's heart sunk under the grief.
 One night she came to my bed with me,
 And kissed and clasped me drearily,
 And blessed my soul with a strange farewell ;—
 Now more of her but God can tell.

XX.

“ O traveller ! by the pale moon-beams,
 When the dull night-winds made their moan,
 Oft on the banks of Isla's streams
 I've sat and wept alone.
 But good of heart, and dear was he,
 The youth that came my woes to hear,
 By Isla's streams he wept with me,
 And I did love him for the tear ;—
 I loved him, for I saw him weep,
 When I was pointing to the deep,

And telling where beyond the wave
I should have had a father brave.—
His sword in vengeance he would grasp,
And lovingly my hand would clasp,
Then bid me be his child, and he
Would be a father brave to me.

XXI.

“ From day to day, and night to night,
Our sweet communion sweeter grew,
And every moon’s returning light
A new enchantment o’er us threw.
But oh the dawn that broke the spell !—
Curs’d be the sun that shone that day !
When I do think of all befell
My chieftain dear of Oronsay ;
For to my uncle’s ears had gone
That by the moon we met alone.—
Wrathful, he gave the stern command
That doomed my love to quit the land ;

And he abashed that ere his sword
Had been so red for Isla's lord,
To his own isle of Oronsay
Unhonoured took his lonely way.

XXII.

“ And ill my swelling heart could brook
To see the wrong my chieftain bore,
When from my window I did look
Towards the foam-besilvered shore;
And like a wretch, whom none would own,
Beheld him all unhonoured go,
Nor lord nor lady with him gone
Upon the beach to part in wo.
Token of no one's love had he,
Ringlet or ring for memory,
Save the poor gift of one forlorn,
From her loose locks in secret torn.
And none to him a farewell said,
Like one accursed all from him fled ;

For that the lord of all the land
Had given, in wrath, the stern command ;
And it pierced my heart and soul to see
That he bore all for loving me.

XXIII.

“ Scarce was he gone—my wedding day
They fixed with him my heart disdained ;
Whom Isla chose, because his sway
His tottering reign sustained,
Against the better powers, in fight
That with their Malcolm bled,
To win the crown, that should in right
Have circled Malcolm’s head.
I loathed him, for he bore the stains
Of blood that warmed my father’s veins.
And could I wed my father’s foe—
The cause of all my mother’s woe—
When he, who still was true to me,
Was weeping o’er my memory ?—

No—sooner, pilgrim, had they seen
My grave in Isla growing green.

XXIV.

“ O ! blest shall be the holy friar
Of fair Iona’s hallowed Isle,
Who sung the requiem of my sire,
And cursed the foe that wrought him guile;
And blest the holy cross shall be,
That in those islands gave him power,
For, like a guardian angel, he
Befriended me in that dread hour.
For chief or vassal never led
His lady to the bridal bed,
Till by that holy friar confest,
And with his heavenly blessing blest.
But wo to him ! whose sword was red
With blood, in secret treachery shed,
For pilgrimage on foot to Rome,
And prayer, and penance was his doom.

XXV.

“ Like wretch respited from the law,
A gleam of feverish joy I felt,
In hearing of that chieftain's awe,
As to the cross of Christ he knelt;
And took his way in pilgrim's weeds
To distant lands beyond the sea,
And still I blessed the friar's deeds,
In hour so dread that rescued me.
To calmer grief my anguish fell,
With hopes that all should yet be well;
Nor many moons were past and gone,
When, wandering by the lakes alone,
I met a friar of orders grey,
Who asked to Isla's towers the way;
But when my answering voice he knew,
Swift to my arms the stranger flew,
And well, beneath his cowl's disguise,
I knew my chieftain's sparkling eyes.

XXVI.

" Sweet were the words he sung to me,
 ' O fly this night from Isla's isle,
 In Ryno's bower I'll wait for thee,
 But go and drink good night the while.
 And when Macdonald's * lips have quaffed
 The cup that gives the guilty sleep,
 Sweet be to him the oblivious draught,
 And sweet to us the noisy deep.
 I went and saw the beagle chained,
 The bow unstrung, the steed unreined,
 The cup of pleasure freely drunk,
 Beneath its weight the warrior sunk,
 Then in the bower of Ryno's grove,
 By moonlight fair, I met my love.

XXVII.

" Our bark beneath the shaded steep
 Upon the billow's bosom lay

* The surname of the kings of the Isles. See Note.

And the murmurs of the moving deep,
Like music, wooed our souls away.
Blest were the winds that blew that night,
They drove us through the shining foam,
And blest the moonbeam's yellow light,
That shone upon this happy home.
For here on this sequestered ground
Our resting-place of love is found ;
We'll build us here our forest-bowers,
And twine them with the honey-flowers,
And fetch us in our silver shells,
The water from the crystal wells,
And ever bless the Powers above,
That we are far from Lochlin's love."

XXVIII.

The lady has told her woes and wail,
And closed her story with a smile,
The innocent lady has told her tale,
But who has listened the while ?

He paces o'er the pebbled strand,
He wanders to and fro,
His dagger's hilt is in his hand,
And his cheek is white as snow.
Fain would the lady now, I ween,
That never a word had spoken been,
For she thinks her love-tale is reprov'd,
And the pilgrim's heart with horror mov'd.
—More would she wish her tale unsung,
If she knew how the stranger's heart is wrung;
For still he paces the pebbled strand,
And his dagger's hilt is in his hand.

XXIX.

Never a word has the stranger said,
And never on Helen glanced an eye,
But his hand is drawing the dagger's blade,
And he paces the strand more hastily.
Is it to pierce the lady's breast,
For it is soft and bare?

Or is it for his own heart's rest

That he draws it in despair ?

It is not for the lady's breast,

It is not for his own heart's rest ;

But that the frenzy of his mind

Has drawn it out by impulse blind ;

For the dagger it is sheathed again,

As the frenzy flitteth from his brain ;

And a flood of tears, in calmer grief,

Falls down to give his soul relief.

XXX.

At that strange sight the lady's soul

Was moved for the wretched man,

As she marked the tears how they did roll,

All down his cheeks so wan.

“ For Christ and Mary's sake, I pray,

Sweet Pilgrim tell to me,

Why fall your tears so fast away ;

Or from what shrine you be ”

The stranger smote his streaming eye,
And dashed the tears indignantly,
“Dost thou not know me then,” he said,—
At the word struck dumb and pale,
As if by magic she surveyed
The cause of all her wail,—
Lochlin ! Lochlin ! it is he !
Her past—her present misery !

XXXI.

Like the shot of an electric flame,
The sudden memories smote her soul,
While o'er his visage went and came
The hues of thought in half controul.
Silent, he looked, and looked her through,
Then from his plaid, with slaughter red,
Drew forth his faulchion full in view,
Not knowing what he did.
Startled at drops that freshly steamed,
“Whose blood is on thy sword ?”

In dread suspense the lady screamed,

“ Oh ! hast thou met my lord ?

And is he slain ? barbarian ! tell—

Ay, that red stream, I know it well,

It is my Owen's, Oh my God !

It is my murdered Owen's blood !”

XXXII.

He would have spoken a healing word

In the wretched lady's ear,

And said that the blood upon his sword

Was but the blood of deer.

But she is lying at his feet,

Nor knows what he would say,

For her snowy breast has ceased to beat,

And her limbs are cold as clay.

No wandering blood is seen to streak

The thin veins of her lily cheek,

On whose immortal beauty strays

The pilgrim's wild impassioned gaze*.

And ere the blood has stirred a vein,
And the fleeting life returned again,
She sails with him the lonely bay,
In the fatal bark of Oronsay.

END OF CANTO FIRST.

THE LEGEND OF IONA.

Canto Second.

———"Who's there?"

Who is it that consorts, so late, the dead?"

SHAKESPEARE.

LEGEND OF IONA.

Canto Second.

I.

* THE vessel's path might yet be traced
Along the bay's besilvered plain,
Ere the curling waves, asunder chaced,
Meet over it again;
And, like a sea-mew's snowy breast
Amid the tide's bewildering shene,
Scarce known from the billow's starry crest,
The bark might yet be seen;
When, like a dove from joyous toil
Returning with his forage-spoil,

Towards the well remembered tree,
Where all alone his mate should be,
Reposed so safe in her new built nest,
That eagle nor hawk should break her rest,
Owen returned to wake his love,
And feast with her in the happy cove.

II.

The vessel's path might yet be told
From cliffs on the mossy mantled land,
If Owen's eye had thither rolled,
Wooded from the winsome strand ;
But nought on earth could turn aside
The glances of his sparkling eye,—
The snowy crests of the shining tide,
Nor the barks that speckled the rosy sky,
While all his inmost soul did pore
On the sweet grot that lay before ;
For Helen, in her silken plaid,
Lies there, on the blooming heather laid,

Her cheeks and lips yet rosy red
With the last blushes love had bred ;
And till that sight he have looked upon,
Beauty or pleasure knows he none.

III.

The roses spread their summer blooms
Untouched upon the dewy thorn,
Save when his bonnet's waving plumes
Amid the tangling spikes are torn.
So steadily his path he tracks,
He halteth not for flower or game ;
His tawny wings the heath-cock slacks,
And feels his heart again grow tame.
Starting across his path, the roe^{*}
Unwounded to his mate shall go ;
The red deer springing from his bed,
Again on that couch shall lay his head ;
And the halting leveret limps in sight,
Yet never an arrow mars his flight.

—The huntsman took with him bow and spear,
But he brings an innocent feast to his dear.

IV.

In his bonnet plumed with feathers fair,
Like a princely peacock's silvery crest,
While the breezes played with his yellow hair,
That never lay at rest ;
And in his mantle, richly crost
With red and green in each other lost,
The forest's wealth he bore,—
Fruits, like his plaid, of every hue,—
The purple rasps and the bilberries blue,
That huntsmens' hearts restore.
And twisted amid his bonnet's plume,
Nodded the honeysuckle's bloom,
Which the bee shall miss at the noontide hour,
When it goes to suck the honey-flower.

V.

And aye, as on his way he sped,
He picked from his mellow fare
The ripest berries and the red,
To be his lady's share.
And now remembering all the strand,
His bosom beats with quicker motion,
As winding first the circled sand,
Within the crescent of the ocean,
To inland, up the crystal bay,
He turns his well remembered way.
And, while the billows onward roll
Before him to his journey's goal,
He marks, beyond the inmost wave,
The ivy curtains of the cave,
That soothe and shelter, as he deems,
His lady in her happy dreams.

VI.

—Now, Lochlin ! couldst thou turn again,
A sight of pleasure thou mightest see,—

The frenzy in thy foeman's brain,—

His utter, utter agony.

All rudely dashed upon the rocks

His purple berries scattered lie ;

And aye he tears his yellow locks,

And smites his burning eye.

On the name of God and Christ he calls,

But the prayer from his lips unfinished falls ;

Mary ! and Helen ! within him die,

For his swelling throat repels the cry.

—Now, Lochlin ! paint him in thy soul,

And quaff revenge like a nectar bowl,

Then, while the draught is flowing still ;

Desist, and swear thou hast drunk thy fill.

VII.

Lo ! on the shells he sits him down,—

There is no motion in his eye,—

The bells upon the heather brown

Invisible before him lie.

No muscle stirs in all his frame,—

He is still as an image of stone,—

And he calls no more on Helen's name,

Nor makes to God his moan.

—So calm on his white hand leans his head,

You would think his agony were fled,

And the vision of a new delight

Settled on his bewildered sight.

—Vain thought ! 'tis but the stupid stare.

And trance of uttermost despair ;—

They fix like death his steady eye

On idleness and vacancy.

VIII.

O ! whence that laughter ?—did it rise

From the grotto where the youth is laid ?

—'Tis he.—On his cheeks and in his eyes

Its traces yet are staid.

It would freeze a human soul with fright

That dimpled cheek to see ;

He looks on the bed where he lay last night,
And he laughs at his misery.
'The smile on his cheek has died away,
With a glittering toy his fingers play ;
He has drawn it from under his plaid and vest.
Where it lay like an inmate of his breast ;—
'Twas Helen's gift—that ringlet dear,
Which had been wet with many a tear.
Time and good fate those tears had dried,
When Owen's hopes before werè lost,
And fates as fair may yet betide,
Though hope again be crost.

IX.

As one, that in a dismal dream,
Has all night long bewildered been,
Led where sepulchral torches gleam,
And yawning graves are seen ;
Ere yet the spell asunder breaks,
And on his soul the daylight beams,

From his strange vision so much wakes.

As half to think he dreams ;
And grasps the ravishing relief,
With a frenzy like his former grief,
Ere the fearful fancy seize again,
On his weak heart, and wildered brain ;—
So Owen grasped the dubious gleam,
Of rising faith's unsettled beam,
As, by the sacred lock awoke,
The midnight of his mind it broke.

Λ.

The stir of life is in his eyes,
No more on vacancy they stare ;
Again the sacred ringlet lies,
Leagued with his bosom, and its care.
With reasonings and conjectures bright
His fond imagination burns,
And his heart again is beating light,
As the dream of bliss returns.—

Fair Helen for her absent chief,
Impatient of her lonely grief,
Has left her silent solitude,
To meet him coming from the wood ;
And 'tis the breeze of twilight morn,
That from the beech the bark has born —
— O ! stay sweet dream ! what startles thee ?—
Aye ! recent footsteps these must be !

XI.

Lo ! onward by the murmuring bay,
Those footsteps lead along the strand,
To where the bark at midnight lay
Amid the yellow sand.
In rings around the spot they meet,
The coral shells among,
And they measure not like Helen's feet,
They are so broad and long.—
Some rover o'er the silver sea,
Has borne away his love,—

O no ! It may not, cannot be—

There is a God above.

A rover in the twilight grey,
Has rowed the vessel down the bay ;
But Helen walks in lonely grief,
The forest-wild to meet her chief.

XII.

When fairy fancy, young and warm,
Bewildered with her own sweet dreams,
Can reel ill to pleasure charm,
And dazzle darkness with her beams,
Is there a sage so dull and cold
Would freeze its warmth with icy lore,
Because the young must yet be old,
And witching fancy witch no more ?
When from a dream's sweet reverie,
The morning storm has startled thee ;
Wilt thou awake thy dreaming friend,
Because his vision too must end ?

No ; let the fluttering boy pursue
The fleeting rainbow's golden hue,
And Owen paint his lady nigh,—
The dream itself too soon will fly.

XIII.

Fond child of fancy, he has gone
On his pilgrimage of pain and wo,
Through sylvan mazes all alone,
With quiver full, and beaded bow.
One glance of his tender eye he cast
Upon the grot's disordered shells,
And a sigh burst from him as he past
His couch of heather-bells.
Some robes of Helen's yet were there,
And the beads on which she told her prayer,
When she cast upon their lonely bliss
Devotion's mystic holiness.
O ! many a tear has Owen shed
Some for the living, and some for the dead,

But so fast as now they never fell,
When he looked on his bed in the lonely cell.

•

XIV.

I may not sing, I may not tell,
The various workings of his soul,
The hopes and fears that in him swell,
His faith in God's control.—
He wandered long the forest through,
And called on Helen's name ;
'Till his path was wet with evening dew,
And the sun had quenched his flame.
But save the echo's false replies,
No voice made answer to his cries ;—
The echoes still from far replied,
Behind, before, on every side ;
And ever to the voice he went,
Now onward called, now backward sent,
But all was vain,—a vision all,
And dewy night began to fall.

XV.

And still he called on Helen's name,
And echoes still the voice repeat,
When the shadowy hour of visions came,
And phantoms through the twilight fleet.
Upon his watery eyes they glanced,
And perished as they passed in air,
And still his eyes the faster streamed,
To see that nought was there ;
For every vision as it grew,
Seemed Helen rising into view ,
Her figure met him white as snow ,
'Twas but the bosom of the sea ,
Upon the shore she seemed to roam,
But vanished in the white sea-foam ;
Or floated on the billow's spray,
Then in a sea-new died away.

XVI.

Now every murmur, far or near,
That breaks the slumber of the gale,

Seems in the wanderer's startled eye,
His wandering thought is wild.
Her's is the mood of wood-dove's cry,
Ere yet the dove be cooed,
And hers he weens the zephyr's sigh,
That wakes the sleeping trees. —
And kindled by the fleeting charm,
The blood unto his heart runs warm,
But ever, when the beam is fled,
Remains left as cold as steel,
Till so bewildered is he thrown
With phantasies and visions vain,
He starts — and chills again like death —
At his own footstep, or his touch.

XIII.

And needed he in that wild mood,
To choose his footing well,
For now 'twas through the darksome wood,
And now the darker dell.

Now from the giddy peak he hung,
Like a bark on stormy seas,
When to the billow's summit swung,
It overtops the breeze.
And like that bark when it must sink,
With dizzy drop, from the billow's brink,
Now plunged he down the rocky steep,
That sunk beneath him dark and deep.
And still he sunk, but still his eye,
Wandered beneath on vacancy ;
Till resting on a twig of heath,
He heard the billow's moan beneath.

XVIII.

And now to flit his footing seemed
A deed of desperate suicide ;
For yet beneath him, as he deemed,
Far distant was the tide ;—
He guessed by fragments of the rock
That from his path his feet had spurned ;

For far they fell, and many a shock
The echoing caves returned,
Before he heard their final leap
Dashed on the bosom of the deep.
And to remount the steep was still
A vainer hope—a wilder will;—
But yet 'twas perilous to stay,
Lest his frail footing should give way ;
For the heath-twigg that propped his foot
Seemed resting there without a root.

XIX.

'Twas hard to choose where choice was vain,
But restless was his heart with care,
And urged him downward to the main,
As if its resting-place were there ;
He muttered but a broken prayer,
Then dropped again,—and dropped, till now
He rested on a cavern's brow,
That echoed from its vaults within,
The ocean's everlasting din.—

And now 'twas little space, he guessed,
Between him and the ocean's breast ;
For there the rocks their last leap gave,
That hurried past him to the wave.—
Anon with strong and steady gaze,
Piercing the spray's bewildering haze,
He half could mark, like living mists,
The broken billows' moving crests,
As onward to their caves they pressed,
To sing and rock themselves to rest.

XX.

'Twere but a leap that love might dare,
To plunge into the tide,
And fitting Owen's mood, for there
Some path might be descried.
But groping round him where he lay,
He felt a goat-track cross his way ;
The path he took, and down it led,
Like steps descending to the dead.—

'Twas onward now ; and now it went,
In windings down the steep descent,—
And still he groped, and followed on,
Till to the hollow beach anon
The stair-way led him.—Bright and bare
Bones of the dead lay bleaching there,—
For many a wretch has tried that pass,
Who ne'er again set foot on grass.

XXI.

Scarce there his footing Owen tried,
When giant-shapes around him grew,
That seemed half-fancied, half-descried,
So dim and dizzy was his view.
And whether they were false or true,
It needed day's bright eye to tell,
For dim with night's bewildering dew,
Such shapes upon the sight might swell.
And they were shapes that rose so high,
To reach their summits mocked his eye ;

For though he touched their base, and told
That they had substance in their mould,
Yet ere his eye could reach their height,
They seemed but shadows of the night ;
Like giant-warriors after death,
That half are earth, and half are breath.

XXII.

And now he weened that round him stood
Some remnants of the wrath of heaven,—
Gigantic towers, by tempests rude,
And blasting fires, asunder riven.
For there the broad and massy wall
Its vast expanse before him spread,
And here abrupt, and steep, and tall,
Huge turrets trembled o'er his head,
Piled on majestic vaults, that ride
With rainbow-span the raving tide ;
Where inward through the echoing arch
The boiling billows proudly march,

As if in triumph to parade
The wrecks and ruins they had made.

XXIII.

The wanderer gazed, and gazed again,
While those tremendous mysteries
Were built and broken in his brain,
Like vapours moulded by a breeze ;
'Till toiled and vanquished with the view,
His aching brain and giddy eye
From the vast wonderment withdrew,
To rest themselves on vacancy.
Loose on the beach his limbs he flung,
And hoarser here the breezes sung,
For through a cavern's vault they blew,
That o'er his head its arches threw.
The cave at either end was free,
And at two mouths received the sea ;
Between two tides the wanderer lay,
And slept and dreamed amid their fray.

XXIV.

They say that balmy sleep can dry
The dew-drop in the eye of sorrow,
And lull at night the bosom-sigh
That wakes again to-morrow.
But light, I ween, the day's distress
That sleep can with oblivion bless.
The tears, that when awake they weep,
The wretched dream again in sleep;
Or, if a change of grief they know,
'Tis but refinement of their wo.—
Betrayed by night's fantastic views,
His lady Owen still pursues,—
Now up the giddy peak, and now
Has reached her on' the mountain's brow,
Then throws his arms around the maid,
But clasps them on an empty shade.

XXV.

But now, as if the dreamer lay
In some enchanted land,

Celestial sounds around him stray,
As from a fairy band,
And if he slept, or if he woke,
The youth could hardly tell,
Till round the caverns of the rock,
With loud and louder swell,
The sounds in airy mazes rove,
And rouse him from his dream of love.
Awake, he knows the cave's recess
But echoes back the notes of bliss,
And from his cell in speed he hies
To meet the murmurs where they rise.
But lo ! the moon before him beams,
And reads to him his former dreams.

XXVI.

Now well he knew no mortal powers
Those arches o'er the tide had flung,—
No human hand had reared the towers
That o'er his giddy head were hung.

'Twas Ocean's mighty sweep from under,
And o'er him heaven's eternal fires
Had riven the mountain's breast asunder,
And hacked it into domes and epires.
Had one a soul without a tie,
Alone he there might live and die ;
But Owen's heart was onward moved
In quest of beauty more beloved ;
For still the music drew him on,
Till marred by other tides anon,
He knew amid the billows' swell,
The holy chime of a convent bell

XXVII.

Cheered by the sacred tones, he threw
His eye in rapid circles round,
To catch, amid their misty dew,
The fountain of the sound.
And still from the ocean's echoing caves
The sounds were backward flung,

But he weened they came from the Isle of Waves,

So holily they sung.

From the holy isle he weened them to be,—

The isle that hallows the Western sea.

And lo ! like stars through the cloud of night,

A ruddy cluster of tapers bright,

Piercing the billow's watery haze,

Burst on the wanderer's gladdened gaze,

Till dark and dim on the holy isle,

He marked, by their light, the convent's pile.

XXVIII.

Ere the chimes of the holy bell had died,

And the mountain's echoes melted away,

As Owen gazed on the murmuring tide,

That rolled before him its shining spray,

He marked beyond, by their tapers' ray,

'That guided them through the cloud of night,

A dusky vision of figures grey,

Till the shadowy piles closed over their light ; - -

These are friars that nightly repair,
At the midnight hour, to the house of prayer.
But figures now of a holier hue
The light of the taper's star pursue ;
Arrayed in robes of the virgin snow,
Like a train of sister-saints they go ;—
These are nuns that nightly adore
The God of Heaven on Iona's shore.

XXIX.

Was it a thought by reason sway'd,
Or the mood of a lover's brain,
To ween that his lady he survey'd
Among the holy train ?
It was a feeling undefin'd,
That reason's rule might chide ;
But it fixed upon his heart and mind,
And urg'd him o'er the tide.
No bark was by with sail or oar . .
To bear him to the holy shore ;

But strong was his love, and strait the sea ;
His heart was bold and his limbs were free ;
He gave his fate to the billows' breast,
And looked to the holy isle for rest ;
And soon he kissed on the sacred strand
The jasper rocks, and the silver sand.

XXX.

It was not there his lot to rove
Among the garden's ruddy blooms,
Nor met he there the spicy grove
To balm him with its rich perfume.
The forest trees were thinly strewn,
The ivy-shade was rare to see,
And naked rocks were loosely thrown
On all the verdant vales of I*.
Yet he who touched its strand would feel
A charm that speech could not reveal;—

* Pronounced Et. See Note.

It came not from the shining sand
That girdled all the glittering strand,
Nor the bugloss-flower, nor the silver shells ;
But it came from the tombs and the cloister-cells,
And crosses, that with solemn awe
The stranger's knee to the dust would draw.

XXXI.

The pious wanderer felt its charm,
As on the holy soil he trod ;
And wandered, while his heart grew warm,
With tresses bare and feet unshod.
Now turfs, that shroud the dead men's bones,
Beneath his wayward steps are spread,
And his feet are on the sculptured stones
That wear the memories of the dead.—
Many a name the stranger reads,
And many a record of holy deeds.—
Kings, that have ruled in other climes,
Have doffed their robes and shriev'd their crimes,

And sought with penance, gifts, and prayer,
Asylum for their ashes there.

XXXII.

What name arrests the stranger's eye ?
And dims it with a sudden dew ?
Can mortal bosom heave a sigh
So deep for one it never knew ?
The deepest sigh,—the saddest groan
That ever Owen drew in grief,
Is heaved upon that sculptured stone,
That stares him like a living chief
With all his armour on, as when
He fought and mixed with living men ;—
As when he led on battle plains,
The glory of the good Macleans.—
— With pious awe the stranger felt
The spirit of the tomb, and knelt ;
And to the icy image pressed
His trembling lips, and beating breast ;

For he felt his soul's returning fire
Burn on the grave of Helen's sire.

XXXIII.

Still to the chilling touch he clung
As if a spell on his limbs had power,
When in his ears a murmur sung,
Like the fall of a summer shower.
He looked to the Abbey's hoary tower,
He looked to the cloister walls,
And still like the fall of a summer shower
The busy murmur falls.
To the chapel's glimmering pile he turned,
And lumps through the dusky lattice burned.
The murmuring sounds were louder there,
He knew the voice of midnight prayer.—
Awe smote his soul, as all alone
He sat on a sepulchre's sacred stone
At the dead of night, while murmured by
Devotion's pure and humble sigh.—

Awe smote his soul,—for where he trod
He felt the presence of his God.

XXXIV.

And ill the charm that reigned around
 Could human heart restrain from feeling ;
And ill on such a solemn ground
 Could human knee restrain from kneeling.
The heart that ne'er before had felt
 Had there been melted into prayer ;
The knee that ne'er before had knelt
 Had dropt in sudden rapture there ;
For who could gaze upon the clay
Where Oran's martyr ashes lay,
Or know the sacred cell that bore
Columba's dust, and not adore ?
And who in such a scene could hear
The midnight hymn, and not revere ?
—'Twas not the hero of my lyre,
Or ne'er for him had waked its fire.

XXXV.

Wistful upon the hoary pile

He cast his fondly lingering eye,

As still within the echoing aisle

Murmured devotion's sacred sigh ;

“ For there,” he said, “ the waters flow

That wash from stain the immortal mind ;

There toil, and pain, and guilt, and wo

Their resting-places find.

Men in ambition's trials tost,

And maids with wayward passions crost,

Have fled from vanity and care,

And healed their broken bosoms there,—

Like birds from winter's gathering gloom

That fly to lands of summer bloom ;

And back on the forsaken shore

Can look, and feel its charm no more.”

XXXVI.

The murmurs of the aisles are gone,
And gone the taper's beam ;
Now who among the tombs alone
Glides by the pale moon-beam,
Like a white cloud that calmly sails,
The calm of a summer sky,
When the soft breath of sleeping gales
Alone is hovering by ?
Is she a ghost that haunts the graves
When the sun's asleep in the ocean-caves ?
For such the scene, and such the hour,
When the spirits of the tombs have power.
On graves, before the grass has grown,
They walk at night to make their moan ;
You know them by the shroud they wear,—
Then silent gait, and steady stare.

XXXVII.

The vision, like the lightning's flame,
Half smote the stranger's heart to death;
The warm blood curdles in his frame,
His leaping bosom mars his breath.
He has started from his icy grasp,
From the hard and chilling stone,
And flies the fleeting form to clasp,
Ere it be for ever gone.
The ghostly figure glides away ;
With a worldly man it may not stay ;
It glides away by the abbey-tower,
Like a mist at the morning's purple hour ;—
In vain the youth pursues and calls,
The vision floats along the walls ;—
He calls on Helen. —At the sound
The figure starts, and turns her round,
A moment pauses in amaze,—
Then flitteth from his ex pty gaze.

XXXVIII.

“ It was her very form !” he cried ;
“ Yet in her love how changed !
In the flow and ebbing of a tide
Can she be so estranged ?
But why that floating veil so white ?
No veil of snow had she ;—
That is the veil at dead of night
That on a ghost you see ;—
I am abandoned now.”—His heart
Seemed through his swelling throat to start
Upon his dry lips, pale as death,
His quivering murmurs paused for breath ;
When from the shadow of a tomb
Issued a voice amid the gloom.

XXXIX.

“ O who art thou, mysterious youth !
That bendest over Douart’s tomb
At this untimely hour, in ruth
For his untimely doom ?

He had a child that mourned his loss,
A wife that mourned it more ;
But now his tomb is grey with moss,
And who laments so sore ?”
“ I bend not now on Douart’s tomb,”
Replied the youth, “ to weep his doom.
—But tell me blessed friar, I pray,
If you saw a lady pass this way ;
The figure of my love had she,
But a ghost of the graves she seemed to be.”

XL.

From the shadow of the sepulchre
No human voice replied ;
So calm the friar stood, no stir
Of life could be descried ;
“ Art thou the chief of Oronsay
That Douart’s child did woo ?”
He said, nor paused for yea or nay,
But to his arms he flew.

To see it was a melting sight
The youth in hunting armour dight,
With bow and arrow, helm and crest,
Clasped to a holy father's breast ;
The sable cowl, and gown of grey,
Met with the tartan's fair array ;
Ringlets of snow, with yellow hairs,
And cloister peace with earthly cares.

XLI.

A moment to the dear caress
The wanderer yielded all his soul,
And o'er his secret wretchedness
A short oblivion stole ;
But when the friar's arms withdrew
Again his heart began to fail,
While with a quicker throb he drew
His breath to tell his tale ;—
“ O holy father ! thou art he
Who rescued Helen once for me ;

Now, blessed father, once again,
Restore my love, and heal my pain ;
For if my eye could right survey,
Whether her mould be air or clay,
Among these tombs my path she crost,
Then in yon cloister-cells was lost."

XLII.

" Then come with me," said the holy man,
" And again that figure thou shalt see ;
But why is your cheek so ghostly wan ?
Why stare your eyes so drearily ?
I'll guide thy steps aright to her
Who crost your path all white as snow,
For I have come her messenger,
Your errand at this tomb to know.
Gentle shall be her greeting hail ;
But why is your cheek so ghostly pale ?"
He took his hand, " Come follow me ;"
The stranger shook like an aspen tree ;

“ To the cloisters come,—what dread you there?”

“ A sight which I have no heart to bear.”

“ Follow, and fear not, I will guide,

Where gentle souls alone reside.”

XLIII.

Again mysterious terrors shook

The bosom of the trembling youth ;

But yet the friar's hand he took,

And trusted in his truth.

Among the spectred tombs they hied,

Through rusty gates and arches grey,

Till cloisters hemmed on either side

Their path in grim array.

And all between was silence dread,

Save when, at fits, was heard the tread

Of nun upon the stony floor,

Or the hoarse creak of cloister-door ;

And all was darkness, save the flame

That from a distant taper came ;

The flame across the alley fell,
But the taper was invisible.

XLIV.

And redder still, and redder glanced
The glimmering taper's fitful glare.
As near, and nearer still advanced
With equal pace the pair.
Their pace was equal, till they came
Within the taper's brightest blaze,
When on the fountain of the flame
The stranger fixed his gaze ;
For lily fingers held the brand,
The torch revealed a lily hand,
A gentle frame, and saintly mien,
And pensive features, so serene,
Her own pale bust she seemed to be,
Stamped with eternal harmony.
“ Now mark ! whose ghost is there, my guide ?
It is my Helen's,” Owen cried.

XLV.

At the sound of that mysterious name
The saintly sister raised her head,
And tossed around the taper's flame,
But all was silence dread ;
Till once again his giddy gaze
Owen upon her features threw,
That shone amid the stronger blaze
More certain to his view ;
While fainter lines alone remain
To match the image in his brain.—
“ O tell me, blessed guide,” he cried,
“ Whose form is that so like my bride ?
Strangely bewildered I have been,
And many a dizzying phantom seen ;
But on earth if Helen's mother be,
Methinks that figure might be she.”
“ The God of heaven thy steps does steer,
For the mother of thy bride is here.”

XLVI.

Stricken with terror and despair
For the sad tidings he must bear
 To break that saint's repose,—
Where pleasure else, and sweet surprise
It had been to his heart and eyes
 To ask and to disclose, --
The stranger from her sight would fly
To shun the sorrow of her eye ;
But that a movement of his soul—
A sympathy's divine control,
Stirred up by nature,—marred his will
With impulse irresistible ;
And forward, desperate of his fate,
He followed to the sacred grate,
Where tenderly to one another
The monk reveals the son and mother.

XLVII.

There is in souls such sympathy,
 When framed for one another,

Like clouds that meet upon a sky,
 'They rush into each other.
A moment to its sweet control
 The mother and the son
Abandon all their heart and soul,
 'Till both their souls are one.
But starting from his dream of bliss,
In terror at his joy's excess,
The youth prevents the sister's gladness
With his own fate's returning sadness ;
And with his dismal tale replies
To the keen question of her eyes ;
Then shrouds him in the friar's shade,
To shun the misery he had made.

XLVIII.

A long and silent pause ensued,
 That none had yet the heart to break,
When calm, as from a musing mood,
 The saintly sister seemed to wake.

Her mild moist eyes to heaven she raised,
Then calm on Owen fixed their beams,
And with a mellow sweetness gazed,
That might have soothed a maniac's dreams.
“ My son,” she said, “ it is not given
To man to read the ways of heaven;
Its destinies to human eye
Are dark and full of mystery.
But we can trust the ruling will,
That works for good with seeming ill,
And cheer with faith our present pain
That Helen shall be found again.”

XLIX.

With holy talk she thus consoled
The stranger's heart forlorn,
And many a melting story told
Of what herself had borne.
She told him of the bitter grief
That tore her from her child,

And of her flight from Isla's chief
Through seas and deserts wild;
Till in Iona's convent-towers
She found asylum from his powers;
And many mysteries she revealed
Of friendships acted, yet concealed,
Till Owen wept to trace the maze
Of his past loves through other days;
For he had had, to bless his lot,
A guardian saint, yet knew it not.

T.

Now turned the talk on Lochlin's doom,
And strange conjectures dimly rose,
As twilight o'er nocturnal gloom
Uncertain glimmering throws.
Like growing day they dawned apace,
Till Helen's fate they half could trace,
For Lochlin's pilgrimage is o'er,—
Last night Iona's isle he won,

And hied him with the rising sun

For Isla's castled shore.

And sure it seems that o'er the tide

He bears with him his rival's bride.—

The sister's eye is raised to heaven ;

Owen's upon his sword is driven,—

Upon his arrow and his bow,

For Isla's isle prepared to go ;

“ Now know I where to search,” he cried,

“ From whom, and how, my stolen bride.”

LI.

He would have burst through night, and tried

Nocturnal chances midnight errors,

Without a friend, without a guide,

He would have tried the ocean's terrors ;

But the meek sister's saintly eye

Sent through his soul its mellow mildness ;

“ Repose to night, to-morrow fly,”

She said and soothed his wildness.

Then gave him of her convent's fare,
And blessed his destiny with prayer,
And courteously his love implored,
If Helen e'er should be restored,
That in Iona's isle might be,
Not far from her, their sanctuary.
— Anon the friar led his guest
To share his cloister's hallowed rest.

END OF CANIO SECOND.

THE LEGEND OF IONA.

Canto Third.

" Away to heaven, respective lemy,
And fire-eyed fury be my conduct now."

SHAKESPEARE.

THE LEGEND OF IONA.

Canto Third.

I.

THE orient blushed with the dawn of day,
Like a garden of roses red ;
And the mountain-mists grew thin and grey,
Like the locks on an old man's head.
Still on the bloom of the bugloss-bells
The silvery dew untrodden shone,
For the badger had not left his cells,
Nor the deer from his midnight pillow gone ;
And lonely still in the coral caves
Murmured the everlasting waves,

Like children of the mighty deep
Singing their aged sire asleep.
And on the billow's heaving breast,
Like a cradle rocking a babe to rest,
The bark prepared for Owen hung,
White as the foam around it flung.

II.

Through the ocean's watery solitude,
On his faithful errand gone,
It fitted the pilgrim's pensive mood,
To wander all alone ;
For the song of the merry mariner,
He had not a heart to hear,
So busy was his bosom's stir
With a lover's constant care.
His bark was rigged with oar and sail,
One for the calm, and one for the gale ;
With a little helm to guide her way,
And a flag for signal floating gay ;—

Like a nymph of the ocean's coral caves
Walking amid the merry waves,
She glided away from the rocky shore,
And the voice of the waters went before.

III.

So smooth and gentle was her way,
So musical her motion ;
The drowsy gulls like dreamers lay
Beside her on the ocean ;
And never stirred their downy wing,
Nor plied their finny foot ;
But yielded to the billows' swing,
And to the gale's pursuit.
So near her path the divers played,
They felt the motions that she made ;
But still they rode the billow's crest
With moveless wing, and fearless breast.
And onward, like a cloud of snow,
The solan goose came sailing slow ;

But thrice careered around the mast,
In silent pleasure, ere she past.

IV.

The holy bark went on ; and now
A lovely scene around her grew ;
From side to side, and from stern to prow,
The mariner's eye it drew.
From north to south it drew his eye ;
It drew it from east to west ;—
And far and wide, from sky to sky,
His eye could never rest ;
So swift around him lived and died
The beauties of that lovely tide,
As fleeting from his bark's career,
A path of their own they seemed to steer ;
While the thin curtains of the skies
On the ocean's bosom fall and rise,
As if their pleasure it had been
For Owen's eye to shift the scene.

V.

Half hid beneath their doubtful shades

The tawny crests of Ulva lie ;

And Staffa's cliffs and colonnades

Are mingled with the sky ;

And purple Col, and green Tiree

Beneath their silver billows fade ;

But Dorril still, and holy I

Are peering through the shade ;—

And Mull,—that to the billows' brunt

Sublimely bares her mangled front,

That, hacked and scarred with winds and waves,

More boldly still their battle braves ;

Schooling, amidst their fearful jar,

Her proud Macleans for future wars,

That foemen from their battle-shocks

Might learn the mettle of their rocks.

VI.

On went the blessed bark ; and now

A blessed path she chose ;

For on an open plain her prow
Pursued the ocean's snows.
And, all throughout that glassy tide,
A lake it seemed to be ;
For a ring of islands, far and wide,
Encompassed all the sea.
But trust not to that ring of land,
Lest the breeze should come from Scarba's strand ;
For far upon a boundless main,
Thou then mayest seek for rest in vain ;
And if the breeze blow from the west,
Then turn not to the east for rest ;
For, deaf to faithful lover's prayer,
'The Coy. Vreckan meets thee there.

VII

But well the mariner knew the guiles
Of that bewitching sea ;
And through the fairy ring of isles
In fearless mood went he.

And lovely still was the watery plain,—
 So glassy it shone and bright,
The main seemed land, and the land seemed main,
 Like the meeting of day and night.
And in that landscape's fair delusion,
That seemed a happy dream's confusion,
'Twas sweet to mark the sun and shade
That o'er the mingled mountains strayed,
As airy clouds were passing by,
Or guillemots obscured the sky;
And now they towered above the deep,
Now in its bosom seemed to sleep.

VIII.

Chief of that ring, when Iola's strand
 Attracted Owen's heart and eye,
Upon his sword he laid his hand,
 The sharpness of its edge to try;
And stretched his string, and bent his bow,
 And aimed his arrow to the sea,

And on the plumes of duck and mew
 Made trial of his archery ;
For well he knew the dreadful strife
That waited him for love and life,
Ere he from Isla's angry lord
Regain his bride with bow and sword.
—But when he turned to Oronsay,
A milder mood resumed its sway ;
For images of love and joy
The workings of his soul employ.

IX.

He joyed to mark his father's towers,
 And gaze upon his castle-walls,
For now came on the evening hours,
 When mirth was in the halls.
And, like a father by their side,
 He marked the abbey, grey with years,
All holy with the wreck of pride,
 And penitence's tears.

He saw the tints of setting day
Upon that hallowed mount decay,
Which St Columba climbed of yore,
To mark if Erin's emerald shore
Could be descried from thence; for he
Had made a vow of sanctity,
To plant the cross upon a land
Invisible from Erin's strand;
And when her shores he thence could trace,
He sought in I his resting-place.

X.

The bark went on : and now the land
Drew nearer and more near ;
But need was now for skilful hand
Her helm aright to steer ;
For there she feels the eddy-shock
Of crossing waves and tides,
As on by dark Bird-island's rock
In merrier mood she rides.—

No home or resting-place is there,
Save for the chough and screaming stare ;
Or shieldrake with its plumage gay ;
And gammet darting on its prey ;
And colke depluming its own breast,
Impatient of its aged vest.

XI.

Safe through the eddy's fatal roar
The bark has reached St Oran's strand ;
And never on a dearer shore
Did Owen's vessel kiss the land.
Between the shelves of lofty rocks,
Crested with ivy-mantled oaks,
So quiet was her resting-place,
The codling's shadow you might chace.
She slept upon the shaded bay
As still as if on land she lay ;
And to land the mariner lightly sprung,
By the ivied oaks that o'er him hung.

—The touch of that enchanting soil
For a moment healed his pain and toil,
And higher beat his bosom's strife
With the crowding pulse of stronger life.

XII.

When won with fortune's fair array,
Her honeyed tales, and golden smiles,
The youthful dreamer far away
Has followed her bewildering wiles ;
'Till checked, and crossed, and undeceived,
From vain pursuit his soul recoils,
To mourn the dream so long believed,
And fly the fair betrayer's toils ;—
How sweet it is to have a home
From whence the heart no more may roam—
A dwelling full of love sincere,
And truth to youthful fancy dear !—
A moment on that hallowed spot
May Isla's chieftain be forgot ,

Owen recall his infant mood,
And dream again that all are good.

XIII.

Already o'er his cares and fears
The short oblivion sweetly stole,
As the images of other years
Were settling on his soul.—
Delusions dear ! they made him blest,
Though he must wake to weep,
Like a deer with an arrow in his breast,
When his pain has paused in sleep ;
For the images that through him fleet
Are simple, innocent, and sweet.—
Successively they rise and vanish,
As sweeter reveries, sweeter banish.—
Each spot of ground, that meets his eyes,
Its kindred memory supplies,
As if with every stone and ree
His soul held secret sympathy.



XIV.

Now dipped the sun his mellowed flame
Beneath the ocean's shining spray ;
And twilight o'er the waters came,
Like a pilgrim clad in grey ;
While the skies their pitchy curtains weave,
To mantle the land and the deep ;
And, muffled in her robes of eve,
Mild nature sinks to sleep.
'The eagles, on the mountains, fling
Around their brood a warmer wing ;
No more the gannets, in the bay,
Prepare to dart upon their prey ;
In marshalled lines along the sky
The wild geese to their refuge fly ;
And o'er the sea-besilvered shore
The sooty raven struts no more.

XV.

But not like them is Owen doomed
'To taste oblivion's balmy power ;



In vain the dull night, raven-plumed,
 Leads on for him its breathless hour ;
Save that beneath its pitchy wing
A dreader silence it may bring,
For melancholy musing care
To mope itself into despair ;
For the great work is yet to do
That God has given him to pursue.
And dreadful wrongs must wring his soul,
And dreadful strifes his breast control ;—
The passions that no soul can sway
His gentle heart must yet obey,
Ere, trained to blood and vengeance, he
May work the will of destiny.

XVI.

His home beloved—his home of joy
 Now through the dusky twilight peered,
Where he had been a happy boy,
 By happy parents reared.

At the dear sight, with sudden start,
The life-blood hurries to his heart.
Already in his fancy's bliss
He meets his parents' fond caress ;
And in their eager aspect reads
The sympathies his fortune needs.
—But gazing on his towers the while,
With closer view, he checked his smile ;
For dizzier grew his searching look,
As altered sights his bosom shook,
And terrors rose, he knew not why,
Amid the night's uncertainty.

XVII.

A steadier view he strove to gain,
As near and nearer still he drew ;
But his eyes moistened with the pain,
And doubt more doubtful grew.
Yet still his eyeballs he would strain,
Still wash away their misty dew ;

And still confusions crossed his brain,
And mists obscured his view ;—
When through the dusk a beagle sprung,
And to his mantled bosom clung.—
Its gory paws, the while, bedewed
The garments of the youth with blood ;
And in its eye there was a look
That might a marble soul have shook,
So bloodily it rolled its glare
Across the youth, to catch his care.

XVIII.

With sudden horror Owen shook
The beagle from his rough embrace,
Though in its strong and steady look
An old companion he could trace.
“ The blood upon its paws,” he said,
“ Might from the fox have flowed ;”
And with a quicker movement sped
His dew-besilvered road.

But dismally the beagle bayed
At every step its master made ;
And crost his path, and marred his pace,
And howled, and stared him in the face ;
Till now he came within the ray
Of torches from the castle grey ;—
On broken walls and gates they fell,
Till he the work of arms could tell.—
Anon upon the rampart's height,
By their red tapers' quivering light,
He dimly marked, with misty ken,
The plumes of Isla's crested men.

XIX.

The blood ran cold to Owen's heart
At sight of Isla's hated crest ;
And terrible suspicions dart,
Like arrows, through his breast.
The wrath, the vengeance, and the crimes
Of one that never knew control,

With all the deeds of other times,
Flash on his startled soul.
He trembles with the boding thought
Of what revenge his flight has wrought . . .
In Isla's soul, when it was known
That with his Helen he was gone ;
And fears to find the vengeance-shower
Fallen on his father's harmless tower.
—Forward he springs, with bended bow,
'The worst—the uttermost to know.

XX.

The beagle howled, and the bugles blew,---
For the men have seen the stranger's crest ;
And their bows were bent, and their arrows flew,
Laid to the level of his breast.
But with a shield invisible
The life of the youth was armed ;
And the barbed weapons, as they fell,
His breast received unharm'd ;

For destiny her saviour wings
Around his faithful bosom flings.
Behold ! the arrows cleave the air,
Fanning his locks of yellow hair ;
Tatter the plumage of his crest,
And tear the mantle from his breast ;
But harmless drops his garments stain,—
They issue from no vital vein.

XXI.

Again the archer's arrow speeds,
 Winging its empty way ;—
But who the while so calmly reads
 The face of Oronsay,
And gazes on his plumage bright—
 The plumes of Oran's isle,
Then greets him with a stranger's right,
 And with a friendly smile ?
The watchmen slack their bended yew,
For now the friar's garb they view ;

And well the sanctuary they know
That friar's mantle can bestow.
—Meanwhile, the father and the boy
The momentary pause employ,
By question frank, and answer free,
In tracing ancient amity ;
Till, both recalled, embraces dear
They mingle with a faithful tear.

XXII.

Soothed by the father's pensive eye,
Like one who views the saintly moon
Come forth into an angry sky,
To grant a traveller's boon,
The youth returned his greeting hail
With gentle courtesy, but brief,
For at his heart a heavy tale,
He waited in his grief.
Awhile he paused in breathless fear,
To question what he durst not hear,—

As if to speak that question were
The watchword for his own despair ;
Till restless fear itself supplied
The strength that nought could give beside ;
And with a breath, that seemed his last,
He asked the monk of what had past.

XXIII.

“ Rash boy !” the holy monk began,
And paused as if for breathing-space ;
While red and pale alternate ran
O’er Owen’s shifting face.
“ Rash boy !” the monk resumed, “ thy woes,—
Which scarce without an earthly tear
Can cloistered apathy disclose,—
Hast thou the heart to hear ?”
He paused again for breathing-space,
And watched his listener’s shifting face.
“ Go on,” the desperate youth replied,
“ And tell me I’m a parricide.—

So far I guess ;—but how it fell—
For I can bear it—father, tell.”—
The while he spake, his restless eye
Belied him with its agony.

XXIV.

“ Then first our convent’s blessing share,”

Replied the monk, “ for the dews are cold,
And the vesper-chimes shall ring for prayer,
Ere half my tale be told.”

“ O ! well I love your vesper’s fall,
And well your blessing,” Owen cried,
“ But I may not leave my castle-wall,
Lest ill the while betide.”

“ Then come to yonder stone of moss ;
The archers fear the holy cross.”
They sat them down on a mossy stone,
The monk to tell, and the youth to moan ;—
A Christian cross beside them stood,
Funereal as their mournful mood,

For once, for requiem and prayer,
A chieftain's corse had rested there.

XXV.

“ You may not go,” the monk began,
“ Into the castle of despair,
For of your father's kin or clan
No living soul is there ;
Save one with visage ghastly white,
And locks of silver, loose and bare,
That ever more, by day and night,
Her withered fingers tear.
For Isla's men are in the halls ;
Their archers watch upon the walls ;
Around the shattered gates they stand,
Guarding the pass with bow and brand.
With crimson robes their limbs are bathed ;
Their buskined feet in blood are bathed ;
And with their iron feet they tread
The shattered armour of the dead.

XXVI.

“ And should you pass the guarded gate,
It is a wretched sight to see
That wretched one, as desolate
As wretchedness can be ;
For on the castle’s flinty rocks
She leans in mockery of rest,
And aye she tears her silver locks,
And beats her naked breast,
When searching for a kindred eye,
She stares around on vacancy ;—
Nor can she leave her castle’s halls,
While Isla’s men are on the walls ;
For there a hostage she must stay,
Till her son’s life her ransom pay.

XXVII.

“ I left for her my cloister-cell,
To shrieve her soul from earthly stain,
And ever in my brain shall dwell
Her penance and her pain.

My offered hand in hers she took ;—
I felt the cold embrace, and shook,
For her lean fingers they were chill,
Like the touching of an icicle.
—O gentle chieftain ! I am slow
In winding up her tale of wo,
Because my brain her image sways,
And scatters memory's flitting rays ;
Yet in its twilight I can read
The records of a dreadful deed.

XXVIII.

“ The chieftain of your father's race
Had blown the bugle-horn,
And roused the beagles for the chase,
At dawning of the morn ;
When in the gales of Oronsay
The flags of Isla flew,
And startled, in St Oran's bay,
The dreaming duck and mew.

Anon upon the rocky shore
Plumes after plumes were seen to pour,
Till, all arrayed with bow and brand,
Threc hundred men were on the strand ;
And at their head, in warlike mood,
The lord of all the islands stood.

XXIX.

“ ‘ What seeks the lord of Finlagan
In the isle of Oronsay,’
Said the chieftain of our kindred clan,
‘ At dawning of the day ?
In Oran’s isle there’s not a foe
To the lord of Isla’s towers ;
And you come not here to hunt a roe,
So mighty are your powers.’—
‘ I come to hunt a deer that’s strayed,’
The haughty lord of Isla said.
‘ Unbar your gates, unbar them wide,
And give me back my kinsman’s bride ;

And yield your traitor boy to shame,'
With sterner voice he cried,
'Or I will make your towers a flame,
My bloody search to guide.'

XXX.

"O gentle boy! it made me wild,
To see the wretched lady's grief,
When she told the deed of her darling child
That wrought the wrath of Isla's chief;
For he had wooed another's bride,
In the castle of Finlagan,
And fled with the lady o'er the tide,
When the moon was shining wan.
And Isla weening they had found
Their refuge on St Oran's ground,
Now came with troops of warlike powers,
To drag them from their sheltering towers.
But nought was there but mystery,—
Dark question, meeting dark reply,—

Till Isla, racked with jealous ire,
Began the search with sword and fire.

XXXI.

“Sorely her pang the lady bore,
When she told the slaughter of her clan,
For she had seen her husband’s gore
On the sword of Finlagan.—
She had seen the lord of Isla tread
The purpled plumage of the slain,
And strew her chambers with the dead,
Till his bloody search had proved in vain,
And he sought his royal ships again.
But here he left that dismal band
To guard the castle with bow and brand,
And keep the lady a hostage bound
Till Owen bleed, and Helen be found.
—Soon as the deadly feud was past,
And the bugle blew its parting blast,

Among the dead she sought her lord,
But found, alone his shattered sword."

XXXII.

He paused.—The youth unsheathed his blade,
And knelt upon the downy moss, -
One hand upon his sword he laid,
And one upon the cross.—
The hand that held the bright claymore,
Towards the dewy heaven was thrown,
And there a dreadful vow he swore,
That seemed to move the stone.
His broken words confusedly fell,
That the monk their meaning could not tell;
But he weened it was a vengeance-vow
By the sweat upon the chieftain's brow;
The while he seemed with steady eye
Searching the skies for destiny,
As if the book of fate he read
In the white cloudlets o'er him spread.

XXXIII.

Scarce had he started from the cross,
Scarce from his lips the vow had gone,—
His knee-track still upon the moss,—
His breath upon the stone,—
When, like the song of saints, arose
The chiming of the vesper-bells,
Weaning the night from her repose
In her raven-curtained dells.
The chieftain felt the holy sound
Blessing his new-breathed vow.—'The ground
Was sanctified on which he stood,
And hallowed his impatient mood.
"Now father ere we part," he said,
"Give me thy blessing on this blade;
For while a mother sheds a tear,
Methinks its should not shine so clear."

XXXIV.

"Rash boy!" the holy father cried,
Trembling for what the youth had done.—

“ Nay, mark me, tria,” he replied,

“ And know thy chieftain’s son,—

Once I was gentle as a dove

Dandled upon the lap of love ;—

A dreamer full of fancy schemes,

And still of peace were all my dreams.

In Isla’s wars my sword I drew,

And trembled at its purple hue;

And ever, when the field was won,

Weeping the deeds that I had done,

I bathed it in the evening dews

To wash away its hated hues.

—Yet, mark me, blessed sire, to-night

I blush to see it shine so bright.

XXXV.

“ Unpatient boy !” the father cried,

“ O ! seek not now your sword to stain,

For with an odds so fearful tried,

All fortitude is vain.

The blood that warms a heart so kind

O! waste not on a desperate fate,

For low our lady's gentle mind

A deed so rash will rate,

That gives her back her lost delight,

But to be clothed in burial white."

"Nay, father! I have oft been told,"

Replied the youth, "by hermits old,—

And I believe it,—that in fate

Each warrior has his written date,

Which cowards strive to pass in vain,

And wildest valour must attain;

Then mar me not;—if doomed to die,

You cannot stay my destiny."

XXXVI.

He would have fled the monk's embrace,

And to his mother sought his way;

But passing plumage checked his pace,

And dusky lines in dim array.

Half lost amid the twilight grey,

Like silent ghosts they glide along :

Are these the men of Oronsay

That perished for their chieftain's wrong?—

For slow and silent is their tread,

Like the misty spirits of the dead.

Their van is vanished, now their rear,

“Sire,” said the youth, “why stand we here?

The vesper-bell has summoned thee,

The ghosts of the dead are calling me,

And I must give them vengeance due.

—Hark! 'tis the din of battle-strife,

By heaven! it cheers me,” and he flew

Like the mists of parting life.

XXXVII.

The monk gazed after him, and sighed

To think that one so young must fall ;

And ere the vesper-chimes had died

Obed the cloister's call.

The while the clash of blades in air,
The beagle's howl, and the trumpet's blare,
Commingle with the vesper-chime,
Made discord horribly sublime.
'Tis music to the bloody men ;
They fall and die, yet know not when,
Drunken with dissonance. The strife
Is there for vengeance, here for life ;
For this the men of Isla fight,
For that their foes have met at night ;—
Vengeance they seek for murders done
By Isla's king, and now 'tis won ;
For Owen mingles in the fight,
And leads them with his falchion's light.

XXXVIII.

“ Now yield ye men of Oron-ay ! ”
The chief of Isla's kinsmen cries,
“ Or, victim to the bloody fray,
Your captive lady dies.”

Owen's young arm was weak till now ;
'The sweat-drops burst upon his brow ;
The bolted gates are sunder riven ;
The guards of Isla backward driven ;
Their shields are torn, their helmets shattered ;
Their swords are cleft, their quivers scattered ;
Till, with his buskins bathed in gore,
Owen has gained the inmost door.
Its iron bars before him fail ;
Behind there is a voice of wail.
His ear has caught the hollow moan,
But all within is dark and lone.

XXXIX.

A torch pursued him. By its ray,
Across the dusky chamber sent,
He marked the lady of Oronsay
In her imprisonment.
—The torch is in a murderer's hand,—
The last of Isla's scattered band.

With bloody brand, and dirk, and bow,
He comes to strike a vengeance-blow,—
To strike the captive.—Shrinks he now
To wipe the sweat-drops from his brow,
Because a youth has crossed his rage,
Where he sought a lady white with age?
—That youth is harmless now, for he
Lies twined around his mother's knee.

XI.

Is vengeance sweet? The chance is fair
For the foeman now to drink his share.
If trusty be his bended yew,
One arrow-shot may strike the two,—
 'The mother and the son ;
While blind in their embrace they lie,
Before the murderer's aim they spy,
 The havoc may be done.
—O nature ! in the human heart
A god omnipotent thou art;—

The archer's eye is on the aim,
But a terror creeps along his frame.
He dares not let the arrow slip,
His naked steel he dares not dip
In that old woman's blood, for he
Has yet a mother o'er the sea.

XLI.

Himself needs mercy now,—if life
Were mercy to him,—for his foes
Crowd on him, hot with recent strife,
And aim the impending blows.
—They too have caught the withering charm
Of that heart-moving sight ;
And powerless drops each idle arm,
As by a palsy's blight.—
Foemen forget their foes,—forget
The wounds that still for vengeance fret ;
And on their drizzled plumage bring
Fresh water from the crystal spring,

Their lady's visage to bedew,
And Owen's faded bloom renew.
—He lifts at length his languid eyes;
“O mother! smile on me,” he cries;
But as he marks her dimple, fain
Would close his luckless eyes again;
For the vacant dimple, it did seem
Of maniac in a frenzy dream.

XLII.

“Come spirit dear! my phantom-child!
And tell me thy true tale,” she cries;
“For sorely thou hast been reviled
By wicked men, and bitter lies.—
I knew that they had murdered thee
In Finlagan's unholy isle,
And that the tale they told to me
Was wicked, and a tale of guile;
For could my soul believe that thou,—
Though strong was the accuser's vow,—

Hadst robbed a bridegroom of his bride,
And fled—a traitor—o'er the tide.—
'Twas falsehood all,—'twas guile I knew,—
For faithful was my child, and true;
I sent him forth, in blooming youth,
A very child for love and truth.

XLIII.

“ They feared to say my son was dead,
But could they dream it pleased me more,
To think that months and years were fled,
And he had never sought my shore—
Beneath my roof a night to dwell,
And make me glad to see him well?
No, no,—alive he could not be,
And stray so long estranged from me.”
— Like the pale moon seen in a lake,
When winds the glassy waters shake,
Trembled the youth. The foemen's swords,
Ne'er pierced him like his mother's words,

That to his mind recalled the past
With a guilty aspect o'er it cast.

XLIV.

"Lady, 'tis true that I have strayed
So long upon a foreign land,
And long in caves my dwelling made—
An alien to my native strand.
And they have told thee true who said
That o'er the tide I bore the maid."—
" 'Tis false, unholy phantom ! thou
Art but a fiend,—I know thee now,—
That hast in mockery put on
The shape and vesture of my son.—
Nightly they haunt me in my dreams,—
Those fiendish shapes,—and thou art one ;"—
"Nay, lady, I am thine," he screams,
Dost thou not know thy son ?
Know me by this," he said, and shewed
A recent wound that freshly flowed ;

“ I found the foe in Oronsay,
And fought to thee my bloody way.

XLV.

“ O lady ! long has been my stay ;
But sore entangled I have been
In mortal cares, and far away
Have acted a perplexing scene.
But for the ruin I have wrought—
Mother, it is a dreadful thought”—
Here told he all his history,
“ But I will twine me round this knee,
That I have weakened more than years,
And bathe it with my blood and tears,
Till thou forgive me.”—“ Nay, my son,
'Tis God—not thou—this deed has done.
“ Forgive thee !—Ay ! poor child !” she cries,
“ I know thee by these suppliant eyes ;
'Twas thus, when thou wert but a child,
They beamed petitions young and mild.”

XLVI.

She kissed him,—for her heart was glad.

Owen's was now a painful part ;

“ Lady !” he said, “ these halls are sad,

And lonely to a lonesome heart.

The convent of our saint is nigh,—

A resting-place for wo is there ;

And fain, till this dull night go by,

I would commit thee to its care ;

For I must leave thee.—O'er the tide,

This night, I sail to seek my bride,

And vengeance for my father.”—“ Nay

This one night with thy mother stay,

For I have heard the goylir's cry,

And the rain-goose singing dolefully.”—

“ I dare not, lady, for a vow

Has past my lips, and rules me now.—

God speed me, I'll return to-morrow,

Yet dare not leave thee here in sorrow.”

XLVII.

“No other place shall be my home,

I'll wait thy coming all to-morrow,

And seek thee in the white sea-foam,

If night come on in sorrow.”

—They rose.—Upon a lifeless clod

The warrior stumbled, as he trod.—

It was his faithful beagle's clay,

That daggled in its death-wounds lay ;

An arrow from its bleeding side

Hung mantled in the purple tide ;

And all the way, from door to door,

Might yet be traced its stream of gore.

Wherever Owen's feet had been

The beagle's blood might there be seen ;

For ever where its lord had led

It still had tracked, and still had bled ;

Till now beneath his feet, at rest,

It lay with the arrow in its breast.

XLVIII.

'Twas ominous—that stumbling tread—

The timorous lady knew,

And backward, with a hand like lead,

Her parting son she drew.

And he the while a heavy sigh

Within his bosom smothers,

And bends on earth his dewy eye,

Lest it should meet his mother's.

—They met,—but with a dewy haze

Bewildered was their meeting gaze,

That neither in the other's eye

Could read their inward agony ;

And had not Helen crossed his heart

Owen had striven in vain to part ;

But faithful love reproved his rest,

And tore him from his mother's breast.

THE LEGEND OF IONA.

Canto Fourth.

“ Seest thou how just the hand of Heaven has been ? ”

CONGREVE.

THE LEGEND OF IONA.

Canto Fourth.

I.

As bees, that build a honey-comb,
In quest of their delicious treasure
From flower to flower for ever roam,
Till they have had their pleasure;
And sing and murmur all the while,
To make their toil a pleasant thing,—
Unwearied thus, from isle to isle,
My fancy flits on airy wing,
Passing the scenes upon her way
That have no honey for her stay.—

Fair seem they to the lingering eye,
That fain would pause in passing by,
For they are clothed in summer's glory ,
But to the structure of her story,
That hurries onward to its end,
No tribute legend they can lend.

II.

But now her resting-place is nigh,
Where she may sport and play,
While the sun shines on her revelry,
For, travelling with his ray,
She must sleep when her toil is done,
And dream of the race that she has run.
—But now she meets him rosy red,
In blushes rising from his bed,
Imparting with his shining hues
Fresh glitter to the mountain-dews ;
And dazzling, with a danting blaze,
The little lake, that proudly plays

Around the isle of Finlagan,
And the palace of Macdonald's clan ;
While the waters twinkle back his beams,
Till the lake a valley of diamonds seems.

III.

Pleasure and merriment it were
For fancy, on her fairy wings,
To dally with a scene so fair,
And listen to the murmurings
Of that same lakelet, as it sings,
Touched by the morn's Eolian airs,
To her that o'er its bosom flings,
The shadow of her rosy hairs ;
But oh ! it were unholy play,
When she for whom it should be gay—
Fair Helen—on this fatal morn,
Has those same golden ringlets torn,
That o'er the lake's transparent glow
A loose bewildered shadow throw,

And drip, the while, with glittering dews,
That moisten all their rosy hues.

IV.

The shining dews hang cold and bright
On the ringlets of her golden hairs ;
But not the dews that flow from night,
Nor that the morning zephyr bears;
But from her weeping eyes they fall,
And lend her locks a brighter hue,
As, leaning o'er her castle-wall,
She gazes on a distant view,
Amid the ocean's specks to mark
If one might be a friendly bark,
That she its gentle crew might pray
To bear her far from Isla's sway.
But there in vain she rolls her eye,
For mists bewilder sea and sky ;
And when the mists are driven again,
The sea is but an empty plain.

V.

That hope of help from wave or wind

Was but the shadow of despair,

The offspring of a wretched mind

When overcome with care ;

For guards the palace-gates surround,

That never close their eye in sleep,

And from her window to the ground,

'Twere suicide to leap.—

But yet so oft its space she viewed,

She shaped its measure to her mood,

Till dangerless its depth she deems ;—

But lo ! to mar her deadly schemes,

The lord of Isla to and fro,

With Lochlin, paced the ground below,

And by them stood an ancient man,

With straining eye and visage wan.

VI.

So great beneath her was the space,

She could not read their deeds aright,

But in the sage's frantic face

She traced a seer's fright.—

He conned the combats of the clouds, *

And gazed upon the weltering waves,

And talked of battles and of shrouds,

Of coffins and of graves.

—She saw his frame convulsed—it shook,

Like shadows trembling in a brook ;

She saw his eye-ball's starting strain,

And heard of blood and shrouds again ;

But scarce the words his lips escaped,

His eye the vision scarce had shaped,

When sudden with a dagger-wound,

The monarch smote him till he swooned ;

And smote again, till from his heart

He saw the ruddy life-blood start.

VII.

It seemed as if the dagger's stroke

Had reached the bosom of the bride,

For all her fantasies it broke,
And all her schemes defied ;
For she of tears and prayers had dreamed,
To mercy moving Isla's soul,
But, struck with horror, now she deemed
A demon had control,
As stalking from the bleeding seer,
With fiendish mockery and sneer—
Yet chafed and fretted with his sight,
Though in their speech they held it light—
The king and bridegroom she did view
'Their talk and mysteries renew,—
Conning a lettered scroll the while,
As if they plotted deeds of guile ;
But soon their voice in distance died,
As from the bloody spot they hied.

VIII.

Now to the rosy-bosomed sun
She turned her glittering eye,

And prayed that ere his race be run
Her heart may break and die ;
For ere the waves of the rocking deep
Shall sing and cradle him asleep,
The wretched maid must take the ring
From the vassal-chief of Isla's king ;
And the sun seems hurrying on the hour,
As if he own'd Macdonald's power ;
For now unto the wedding-feast
The chiefs, and the bards, and the holy priest
Are gathering one and all,—
While the sun is mounting in the sky,
They gather into the revelry
That must at noon befall.

IX.

Merry are they in bridal pride,
And wedding garments gay,
But yet unto the weeping bride
A sadder sight are they,

Than erst unto her mother were

 The men in black array,

Who came at the dreary hour to bear

 Her husband's bier away.—

She sees them gilde from shore to shore,

And shakes at the plunge of every oar ;

At every plume that passes by

Her bosom sobs with a sorer sigh ;

And her sinking spirits faster fail

At each approaching chieftain's hail ;

For against her leagued she deems them all

That come in peace to the wedding-hall.

X.

But the next guest is Isla's foe,

 And to the lady's fluttering breast

Starts, at the sight, a pleasure-glow,

 Soon as she marks his gladsome crest ;

Because—a name of fair renown—

 That Malcolm brave and good is he,

Who fights with Isla for his crown
With weaker powers, but stronger plea.
And long has been their rivalry,
And blood on either side has flowed,
Till doubtful truce is now bestowed,—
On either side conditions named,—
Adjustments hinted, and half-framed ;
And Malcolm, as a wedding-guest,
Is called, in pledge of strife supprest.

XI.

But dubious in those treacherous times
Were peace, and truce, and plighted word,
And they who knew Macdonald's crimes
But trusted in the shield and sword ;
For many a chief, and merry clan,
To Isla's feasts have come,
That never more from Imlagan
Went merry to their home.—

They come on birth and bridal days
To weave the dance's merry maze,
And freely quaff from silver shells,
The juice of the grape and the heather-bells ;
Till, steeped in confidence and wine,
Their failing strength proclaims the sign,
And ere they mark the traitor's hand,
Each sink beneath his fellow's brand.

XII.

And fears and murmurs now were spread
Of Helen's bridal day,
And more was thought than might be said,
Yet many dared to say
That sunny gleams foreboded rain,
And mirth foreboded sorrow,
And they who now at home remain,
Should first be home to-morrow.
But well in war's ambiguous arts
Could Malcolm play his practised part ;

And well with Isla's king could vie
In the guiles of truce and treachery ;—
And doubting now the courteous call
That brought him to the wedding-hall,
With caution matched to fraud, he came
Ready to play Macdonald's games,
For Kernes and Gilliglasses' true
Their guardian wings around him threw.

XIII.

Fretted and chafed was Isla's mood,
As, pacing round his royal towers,
His rival chieftains he reviewed,
Begirt with all his powers.
He cursed his caution in his heart,
Yet summoned up his wiles,
And moved, serene with ready art,
To welcome him with smiles.

* The Military of the Isles.—See Note

—But the first footstep that he made
Upon the murdered seer was dead.—
Sudden the life blood left his neck,
Without a living tint or streak,
As o'er his startled soul returned,
The visions that his mirth had spurned
Recalled by Malcolm's boding force,
And by the prophet's bloody curse.

C. XIV.

But well could Isla change his play
The changing game to meet,
And courteous were his words, and gay,
His rival lord to greet.
“O gentle chieftain! joy to thee, cease,
With war's unseemly brow,
To frown upon our maiden peace
And on our virgin vow
Thanks for these gentle dames to thee,
That deign to grace our revelry,

But ill befits an armed clan
The merry isle of Finlagan ;
For, trusting in our truce and vow,
Defenceless are our ramparts now ,
And, crowned with Venus' turtle sign,
We give the day to love and wine.

XV. .

“ Then welcome, Malcolm ! here shall be
Thy merry bards and ladies gay,
But leave behind, for courtesy,
Thy Carnach * bold I pray.”
A minstrel youth, that by the side
Of Malcolm's steed was riding,
C'hecked, with a triumph-flush of pride,
His answering chieftain's chiding ;
And prayed him by the eventful hour
To try their fortunes in the tower.

—A secret signal Malcolm made,—
His men observed it, and obeyed,
And warmly he was welcomed strait,
Dismantled of his warlike state,
To the merry isle of Finlagan,
With the bards and ladies of his clan.

XVI.

'Twas now a merry sight to see,
Where'er the eye could fall,
The fair and goodly company
That sparkled in the hall,
As, flitting to and fro, they shine
With all the starry hues,
That gold, and gems, and love, and wine
In pleasure's hour diffuse.
But they who love to rest their gaze
On the richest robes, and the brightest blaze,
From place to place, with dazzled view,
The bridegroom's haughty height pursue.

And many weened the bride was blest
Who reigned in such a bridegroom's breast ;
For, next the rivals for the throne,
The first Macdonald he was known ;
And, gilded o'er with royal smiles,
Was courted over all the isles.

XVII.

Some on the lord of all the isles
Their lingering looks would rest,
They loved him for his royal smiles,
And for his spangled vest.
And some would follow through the hall
Their Malcolm's fair array,
For he was comely, fleet, and tall,
The pride of feast or fray.
And they who loved an eye of light,
And simple robes, and ringlets bright,
On Malcolm's minstrel fixed their gaze,
And longed to listen to his lays.

—But lo ! as men withdraw their view
From all the stars, when by the hue
That starts upon the eastern sky,
They guess the virgin moon is nigh ;
Now all their eyes impatient glide,
To meet the beauty of the bride.

XVIII.

Bespangled o'er with sparkling hues,
That from her diamond bracelets flow,
And laces bright as summer dews,
And kerchief white as virgin snow ;
And arisaide of rainbow-die,
In winding folds around her rolled,
And ribbon-braided locks, that lie
Upon her breast like links of gold,
And silver brooch and belt, behold !
The glittering bride appears ;—in show
A willing bride,—so brightly glow
Her bridal jewels, like the light
Of stars that stud the breast of night—

And they are all for Lochlin's eyes,
—But next her faithful bosom lies
A weapon, of more price than they,
To prove her love for Oronsay.

XIX.

Meintime, while yet the powers of earth
Her mortal fate have power to sway,
She may not meet their bridal mirth,
But in a bride's array ;
And thus her wedding-robes are gay,
Such as a willing bride should grace,
Upon a bridal morn ; yet they
Were blind, who could not trace
The inward dream, in which her soul
Was wandering from the king's control ;
For careless seemed her eye to fall
On the brightest blaze of the bridal hall,—
Gazing alone on lauds of thought,
By fancy's fairy magic wrought,—

On lands, where she may meet again
Her Owen, still without a stain.

XX.

And that prophetic dream has given
Such mournful beauty to her brow,
As when a nun has breathed to heaven
Her future life's eternal vow,—
A mournful loveliness—that he
Who once beheld—would never lose,
Yet ne'er could make another see
By any sign that mortals use.
—The multitudes, in silent gaze,
Pay the mute homage of amaze;
And music echoes through the tower
The minstrel's need for beauty's power.
—But lo! a harp, with magic charms,
The bride's bewildered ear alarms,
A sudden trance arrests her eye,
The death-hues o'er her visage fly,

And, ere another breath she drinks,
Upon her golden couch she sinks.

XXI.

'The note has ceased,—and from her dreams
The lady lifts her eye again ,
But still it wanders still it seems
To chace the phantoms of the brain ;
And earthly objects, all in vain,
Are crowded on her earthly view,
For still her eyes, with steadier strain,
Her darling fantasies pursue.
—'They press the wine-cup to her lip,
Her wrists in cooling waters dip,
And proffer questions for reply,
'The errors of her brain to try ;—
But all in vain,—her eye, or ear,
They cannot win—they cannot cheer,
For she has visions of her own ;
And, while her bane is yet unknown,

“ Bards try your art,” the monarch cries,
“ To break the dreamer’s fantasies.”

XXII.

Again the minstrels try the powers,
That mingle mortals with the skies,
Again through all the trembling towers,
The wandering melodies arise ;
And lo ! again the lady’s blood
Starts backward from the whitening vein,
And fantasies—a frenzy brood—
Assail her giddy brain ;
For still a harp of magic spell
She singles from the choral swell ;
Her ear—her brain—that harp has seized—
They cannot—will not be released.
Her straining eyes, the while, express
Confused delight—bewildered bliss,
As if a shadow through her clasp,
Were flitting, which she fain would grasp.

XXIII.

Murmurs, and broken speeches stray,
In whispers through the hall;
Some say the bride has had foul play,
And good cannot befall.
Some talk of poison.—By her side
Stands Lochlin, pale and vest;
And Isla trembling for the bride,—
Yet nought in look perplex,
With gentle speech, and courteous air,
Commands the minstrels to forbear,
As if he feared their witching art
Were working foul on Helen's heart;
And prays her maids the bride to bear,
To drink her chamber's freer air.
The bridal maids around her close,
And lead their lady to repose;
While Isla, eager to disguise
His sorrow from their searching eyes,
Beseeches of his guests, the while,
To share the pastime of the isle.

XXIV.

Chance sends the sought diversion,—lo !

A weary blood-bedabbled man
Craves audience for a tale of wo,
And of a rebel clan :
“ My lord ! I am the last,” he cried,
“ Of all my gallant band,
For the blood of all their hearts has died
St Oran’s bloody strand.

The convent-bell had told the hour,
The watch was planted on the tower,
When Owen, with his rebel crew,
Assailed the gates—our men were few—
They fought, and perished at their post—
True to their trust, till all was lost.
I saw their last blood on the wall,
And scarce have ’scaped to tell their fall.”

XXV.

“ Is the hostage slain ?” cried Isla’s lord,
Fell Owen in the fight ?”

“ Good Sovereign ! they escaped my sword,
In the errors of the night.”—

“ Dastard ! thou hast betrayed our faith,”
Cried the king with a voice like thunder ;
Guards seize him—drag him to his death—
And tear his limbs asunder.”

He added, while his fiery eye
Traversed the crowded company,
“ Were there a friend in all my towers,
A stripling had not mocked my powers,
And ’scaped my vengeful sword ;
But vengeance is within my hall,
And with a double weight shall fall—
Bring forth the captive lord.”

His dark brow brightened with a smile,
More fiendish than its frown, the while.

XXVI.

Far down the winding stairs, that led
To mansions where the living lay,

In darkness buried, like the dead,
Beyond the reach of day,
With fainter, and more faint decay,
The iron warder's rude descent
Resounded from his stony way,
Revealing where he went ;
Till distance closed upon his rear,
And silence full of fancies drear ;
While listening expectation stood,
With panting heart, and burning blood,
And moveless eye, but busy brain—
Shaping conjectures,—Lo ! again,
Announced by clanking chains, they trace
The warder's wo-foreboding pace.

XXVII.

Near, and more near, the grating sound
Arrives, with clank on clank renewed,
Anon with massy fetters bound—
With icy damps bedewed—

The weight of iron on his frame,
And on his brow the touch of time—
Yet haughty still, and full of flame,
As if his blood were in its prime—
As if his limbs were free the while,
The aged chief of Oram's isle,
Is brought to drink the bitter bowl,
That fits the mood of Isla's soul.
—A sight it is of solemn awe,
But some have sworn their swords to draw,
Ere blood so rich and high be shed,
Or harm betall so white a head.

XXVIII.

Now they that Malcolm's bard did view,
Beheld his visage change its hue
From hectic red, to ghostly white —
From white again to deathly blue,
As if some strange unearthly sight
Had smote his soul with sudden fright.

And all the while his steady eye
The hoary victim seemed to spy ,
—Anon, like lightning from a cloud,
He darted from the minstrel-crowd
 Into the captive's arms :—
“ My chief ! my lord ! my sire ! ” he cries ; —
“ My son ! my child ! ” the sire replies,
 And, blind to all alarms,
Like dreamers on destruction's brink,
In one another's arms they sink.

XXIX.

From many a hand the shell has dropt,
In many a vein the life-pulse stopt—
 As in a dream of treason-guilt ;
And many a hand with sudden start,
Leaps like an impulse of the heart,
 To sword and dagger-hilt
But the fire-beams flash from Isl's eyes,
“ ‘Treason is in my halls,” he cries ;

And at the voice, with sudden leap,
Lo ! Owen starts as if from sleep,
And draws his faulchion, “ Treason ! yes ! ”
He answers back, “ my fraud is this,
That I have borrowed Malcolm’s power,
To win my entrance to this tower,
That Helen I might haply gain,
And vengeance for my father slain :
My father lives—so far the strife
Is changed—that now ’tis for his life.”

XXX.

—Now who beheld the signal dark,
That gathered on the monarch’s eye ?
And who aright did timely mark
His Gilliglasses gathering nigh ?
’Twas Malcolm marked aright the cloud,
And shrilly blew a bugle-shout,
Till, true as echo, shrill, and loud,
A bugle answered from without.

— Clamour ensued, and deafening din,
Baffling the king's commands within,
(Disorder such, that none could tell,
Without confusion, what befell.)
— “Treason!” the bustling wardens cry;
“The men of Malcolm hither hie;—
‘They cross the lake—they mount the land’—
“To arms! and fight them on the strand.”
Exclaims the king—“stop Malcolm’s fight,
Before he mingle in the fight.—
My crown—my life—for Owen’s head!—
Traitors! and cowards! are they fled?”

XXXI.

As one that down the skies, in vain,
Pursues a meteor’s vanished gleam,
Or searches, with bewildered brain,
The shadows of a scattered dream,
The fiery king, with idle eye,
Pursued in vain his foemen’s flight,

But in his ear a voice did cry

“ They’ll meet thee in the fight.”

He chaced the voice, and round his path,

Obedient to his royal wrath,

His Gulliglasses closed.—The dames

Trembled behind their faulchion’s flames,

As, cooped in the deserted halls,

They eyed them through the castle-walls,

Till darkness, like a dismal screen,

And fearful silence fell between.

XXXII.

It was the silence that befalls

Between the thunder and the flash,

For soon through all the echoing halls

Ensues the battle’s deadly clash,

With trumpets drowning half its din ;

But still the noise of shields and swords

Is heard, and answered from within

By matrons screaming for their lords.

And maids, that, like a snowy cloud,
Around the shadowed windows crowd,
The movements of the fight to chace,
And in its shifting chances trace,
With bosoms moulded to its griefs,
The fortunes of beloved chiefs;
For lovers' hopes, and matrons' prayers
Are blended with the battle's cares.

XXXIII.

And long they search, in doleful plight,
Before, with aching brain and eye,
In the confusion of the fight,
The battle's order they can spy.
So dark and doubtful is the fray,
It seems a strife without design,
Without an import or array,
That none can trace its parting line.
A moving strife alone they see—
A loose and lawless revelry—

A mass that seems to come and go,
In mad convulsions, to and fro,
Without a will, or living soul,
Its maniac motions to control ;
Like a vast forest shook, and driven,
At once, by all the blasts of heaven.

XXXIV.

But now the fight has shaped apace,
As vassals round their chiefs array,
And in its movements they can trace
The soul, and spirit of the fray ;
For 'gainst the towers is Malcolm's brunt
With strong and resolute design ;
And 'gainst the lake is Isla's front—
Opposing line to line.
Friend ranked by friend—foe fronting foe—
They drive the battle to and fro ;
Now on the ramparts it is dashed,
Now on the purple lake is lashed ;

And ever, as it shifts its ground,
Again the echoing hills resound
The screams of maids, that on the plain
Descried their favoured warriors slain.

XXXV.

But lo ! the echo of their screams
The bride's bewildered ear invades,
As, in her fantasies and dreams,
She hearkens to her singing maids ;
And, starting from her brief repose,
She hurries to the shrieking hall,
Where tears, and swoons, alone disclose
The horrors that befall.
—Something of Owen she had heard,
But 'twas a brief and broken word—
That she petitions, all in vain,
To hear from mortal lips again ;
For dreary looks alone reply
To all the questions she can try :

Nor of the battle can she hear,
Save as its din assails her ear ;
And as she catches, through the crowd,
A partial vision of its cloud.

XXXVI.

She views the fight ; the havoc speeds,
And thinner grows the failing fray ;
But nought its doubtful fate she heeds,—
Her care is all for Oronsay.
Among the living and the slain,
From wing to wing, and van to rear,
She seeks his plumes, but all in vain,
So distant is the fight's career ;
For Malcolm's yielding battle now
Is trembling on the lakelet's brow ;
But, like a flowing tide, amain
Regains its ground upon the plain.
And now she traces Isla's crest,
And Lochlin, by his bridal vest,

And Malcolm, by his helmet's light ;
But still, through all the bloody light,
In Malcolm, or Macdonald's train,
She seeks her Oronsay in vain.

XXXVII.

And still a flitting thought has she,
Like a past feeling sought again,—
A dim and doubtful memory
Half-shadowed in her brain,—
That something she has heard or seen
Of her beloved Oronsay—
His angel voice, or heavenly mien,
On this mysterious day,
Poor dreamer !—'Tis the strange control
Of that sweet harp upon her soul,
That from the minstrel's choral swell,
She singled for its magic spell.
And through her memory's wildered maze
So feeble and confused it strays,

The hand that struck the favourite air
Alone she feels imprinted there ;
And thus she weens her Owen nigh,
Yet—toiled with dreams—she knows not why.

XXXVIII

Anon the towers, and echoing halls
With nearer trumpet-blasts are riven,
And closer on the castle-walls
The battle's brunt is driven.
And now she views Macdonald's crest
With wilder motions tost and shook,
Repressing now, and now repress,
While bound, as with a hook,
To a tall plume of virgin white ;—
And here and there, throughout the fight,
They tug and drive, and meet and part,
To meet again with fiercer dart;
And ever where the one is spied,
The other still is by its side,—

Like birds that combat in the skies,
From side to side, and to and fro,
And now they sink, and now they rise.
Yet still together go.

XXXIX.

But still the king's retreating crest,
With constant motion shook and tost,
Is backward through the battle prest,
Alternately revealed, and lost,
Amid the mazes of the fray,
Till full, at length, on Helen's view,
Where thinner is the fight's array,
His foemen's plumes pursue.—
And Owen's is the plume of snow
That flits with Isla to and fro ;—
'Tis Owen's sword that hooks so tight
The monarch to the constant fight ;
While every fortune of their arms
The bride's unhappy heart alarms,

As doubtful turns and hazards shew ,
A changing fate in every blow ;—
And still, through all its maze,
'Their combat she pursues,—till now,
Behind a rampart's jutting brow,
It flitteth from her gaze.

XL.

A moment of dismay she stood
Without a motion in her breath,
Or living impulse in her blood,
As waiting for the work of death
To burst upon her eyes again,
She paused in agony of care ;
But 'twas a pause she strove in vain
With all her strength to bear ;
For doubled were her soul's alarms,
As still she heard the clash of arms,
But nothing of their fortune knew ;—
And to the palace-doors she flew,

To burst their bolts, and rush amain
Into the perils of the plain,

And Owen's fate survey.—

The battle-scream was louder there,—
But vain was hope, and vain despair,—

She could not force her way.

XLI.

Now up the winding stairs she flew,

Her chamber to regain,

Where from her window she might view

The battle's shifted plain.

And up she hied her darksome way,

Till, through a narrow space,

Across her beamed a glimpse of day,

And checked her giddy pace.

There loud again the battle-cry

Assails her ; and beneath her eye

Malcolm and Lochlin, hooked in fight,

A moment pass before her sight ;

And, rapid as the meteor's blaze,
Again they vanish from her gaze.
Behind them rolls a broken cloud—
 A fragment of the battle's wing;
But not in all the passing crowd
 Is Owen or the king.

XLII.

Still restless with a lover's woes,
 From stair to stair she winds her way,
Till, from her chamber-wall, she throws
 Her eye upon the open day.—
Before her, on the plain below—
 Wiping the warm blood from his sword—
Her Owen stands, like one in wo,
 And at his feet lies Isla's lord,—
His terrible and tyrant brow
As calm as death can make it now,—
Yet bound in such a fearful sleep
As that which wraps the mighty deep,

When the loud tempest in its breast
Has raved and raged itself to rest,—
Seeming as if 'twould start again
At the first breath that touched its plain.

XLIII.

And, mantled in the royal blood,
There too the murdered prophet lies,—
His visions, and his frantic mood,
Still figured in his starting eyes.
—A solemn scene - a moving view
It is to Helen's heart and soul,
O'er which remembered dreams, anew,
In rapid memories roll.
It stirs her heart with pious fears,
And stains her eye with holy tears,
And moves her soul with sacred awe
Of destiny's eternal law.—
—But now she sees her gentle chief.
With pensive air, like one in grief,

Wiping his eyes, and dewy cheeks,
Then fleeing round the rampart's peaks.

XLIV.

And light as Owen's feet she flew,
Till in the bridal hall apace,
Before she felt, before she knew,
The rapid scenes that round her drew,
She rushed into her love's embrace.
Like streams that mingle when they meet,
Their melting souls together flow—
In one communion wild and sweet—
Till earth, and all below,
Its pains and pleasures toils and tears—
Its idle hopes, and idler fears—
Melt into air, and leave behind
But the pure soul—the holy mind—
Such as from God it came, and so
To God again as it shall go—
Bewildered in the strong excess
Of overwhelming blessedness.

XLV.

Is it a dream that never flies—

The trance of a deadly bless,

So moveless are their silent eyes,

So strong is their calm caress?—

It is a dream no mortal heart

Could ever choose to break;—

But, lo! at the trumpet's sound they start,

At the revel-shout they wake.

They wake again—but not to wo,—

The tears of love have ceased to flow;

For Malcolm sits in the royal chair,

Calming the rout with a kingly care,—

With a holy sorrow in his eye,

While his loyal clans in homage vie:—

“Hail Malcolm! hail!” they shout and they sing,

“Long life to Malcolm our lawful king.”

XLVI.

A moment's pause the monarch won,

And “lo! the hand of God,” he said,

“ Was ne’er to man beneath the sun
So visibly displayed.
I tell ye that his angel’s wing
Has hovered o’er my life to-day,
For he that was, at noon, your king,
Had sworn by all his sway,
That never more from Finlagan
Should I return to kin or clan.—
For this alone, with treacherous call,
He brought me to the wedding-hall,—
Lochlin, whose blood is on my blade,
In dying, this confession made ;
For he was pledged to lead the stife
Contrived to rob me of my life.
You know the issue ;—God be praised !”—
A shout of voices round him raised
With rude—but with a loyal sound,
His further speech in clamour drowned.

XLVII.

And joy it is to many a chief

On the blessed change to rest their eyes ;
For it seems as if the star of grief

Were set, and pleasure's sun did rise.
In many an island, far and near,

That sun shall scatter sorrow's night ;
And many an eye shall dry its tear

With gazing on his gladsome light.
—Full oft the lady of Oronsay
Shall tell, in her halls, of the blessed day,
That to her widowed arms restored—
As if from death—her aged lord ;
And oft, with him, she'll love to raise
The choral song of grateful praise
To the Destinies, that bade them close
Their age in undisturbed repose.

XLVIII.

But chief of all who bless the day,

When Malcolm won his fathers' state,

Is that sweet pair, with whom my lay
Has loved, so long, to sport and play,
Through all the changes of their fate—
Through pleasure's smooth and silver tide ;
Through sorrow's rough and gloomy main,—
Till now their bark begins to glide
On pleasure's silver seas again.
They'll say that fortune ceased to frown
When Malcolm won his father's crown ;
And bless the first deed of his reign—
While love and life to them remain—
Above all other deeds, that e'er
Adorned a reign so sweet and fair,—
For with the tie that none can sever
It bound their hands and hearts for ever.

THE END.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

“ Quo me cunque rapit tempestas deterori ho-
po pes
HORAT.

THE HOLM-GLEN,
A PASTORAL.

“Fret not thyself, thou glittering child of pride,
That a poor Villager inspires my strain;
With thee let Pageantry and Power abide;
The gentle Muses haunt the Sylvan reign.”

BEATTIE.

THE HOLM-GLEN.

COLIN AND JESSIE.

JESSIE.

'THIS glen hath beauty in it that might bring
Joy to the soul of any living thing ;
And, having entered once, I have no heart
With it, or its inhabitant, to part ;
But in these sapless roots, so frail and old,
There may be dangerous footing, and false hold,
And we have far to fall, before our feet
With resting-place, on rock or tree, may meet.

COLIN.

Fear not, sweet soul, no evil can betide,
Where the good spirits of this glen preside,
For 'tis a place of innocent resort
To those alone who love the muse's sport,
And to their simple hearts, so soft and warm,
No gentle power could offer vulgar harm.—
But yet a little farther follow me,
Guiding thy downward steps from tree to tree ;—
Here, in the shadow of this ancient oak,
That warps its twisted roots through all the rock,
This simple moss-house from the sultry skies,
And passing rains, a safe retreat supplies.

JESSIE.

It is a rude abode—a wild retreat,—
I dare not enter, 'tis a fearful seat.—
The rock is loose, and, jutting forth in air,
It hangs without a base ;—O go not there !

COLIN.

See I am seated safe, and why not you ?
Here sit beside me,—there is room for two.—
Now we are coupled in our fortunes so,
That, stand or fall, together we must go ;
And common fates induce a common will,
Then while I tarry, thou wilt tarry still.

JESSIE.

You plead aright, because your plea is power ;
For little boots the will in such a bower,
Where through the ivy-shade, that screens its shores,
Its everlasting song the streamlet pours,
Like fairy music rising from below,
With such a silver murmur in its flow,
That from the breast it almost steals away
The conscious sense of what its charms convey ;
Till all that lives is one bewildered thought,
That seems returning to its ancient nought :
And o'er my heart already I can feel
Its soothing power with such enchantment steal,

That, were my friendship less, I needs must stay,
And, still though going, tarry out the day.

COLIN.

And haply not in vain thy stay may be,
For thou dost sit on an enchanted tree ;—
The tree is changed—its ancient shape is lost,—
Young are its boughs—with younger ivy crost ;
Yet still the trunk, with all its roots, remains,
Unharm'd by lightning, and untouched by swains ;
For here the woodman never dared to go—
Scared by the steeps above him, and below ;
Or, if he scaled the rocks with desperate leap,
And aimed his hatchet on the giddy steep,
The angry spirit of the fearful dell
Benumbed his trembling stroke before it fell.—
And blasting fires, that have its branches bared,
From age to age the sacred trunk have spared,
With one old bough to shield it from the blast—
The first of all its offspring, and the last,

And—partner of its fare—one ivy-string,
To shade the trunk, and check the branch's swing.

In that old bough there is a secret charm,
That might the murderer's lifted hand disarm,
Make scarlet guilt to blush itself away,
And toiling passions cease their boisterous fray ;—
For music's gentle spirit lingers there—
Singing sweet ditties o'er a sacred pair.
—Their tale is sad—but if thou hast a soul
That loves sad tales, and pity's soft control,
We have enough of twilight's pensive hour
To weep their loves—before we leave their bower.

JESSIE.

I'll tarry here, while light is in the dell,
If all the while their story thou wilt tell ;
For well I love to hear, in simple strains,
The loves of rural maids, and simple swains.

COLIN.

He was a simple swain—but one who knew
To lend the reddest cheek a lily hue,
And change again the lily to the rose,
As pleased his mood to sing of joys or woes ;
For nature to the favourite youth had given
Apollo's art—the choicest gift of heaven—
In recompense for lack of gold and lands,
And lack of strength to win them with his hands.
And Edward, pleased with nature's liberal boon,
All melting ditties to his harp would tune.--
Here on this rock, when yet that oak was young,
His tuneful tales to listening swains he sung ;
And, while his sires the neighbouring cot possessed,
He soothed their sorrows, and partook their best ;
But here would loiter half his days away,
Enchanted with his own bewitching lay.
And, while his harp to pleasure he would string,
He little recked what future times might bring,

Till future fortunes changed his careless strain,
When Lucy loved him, and was loved again.
His happy mind, that, full of playful glee,
Had wondered oft what worldly care could be,
Now felt the charm of gold's seductive lure,
And half he wept to find himself so poor ;
For Lucy's frame was fine, and ill could bear
His cabin's shelter, and his sylvan fare ;
And though she loved him with so kind a soul,
That worldly cares could nought her love control,
Yet with his ruder lot he feared to bind
A frame so gentle, and so soft a mind.

'Twas then the time when Christians sought to bleed
On Syria's plains, for Christ, and for their creed ;
With Pagan blood their Christian souls to save,
And bravely perish for a sacred grave ;—
When Britain's sons exchanged their frozen lands
For Syria's palmy groves, and burning sands,

Through earth's assembled nations to proclaim
Their lion-hearted Richard's royal fame.

Among the Scots that sought the Holy War
The best and bravest went with Lochinvar.—
He—gallant knight—with all a parent's heart,
Loved the young Edward for his sacred art;
And Edward well could soothe his chieftain's soul
With fancy's dreams, and melody's control;
Could swell his heart for battle's boisterous hour,
Or melt it down for beauty and a bower.
And now the knight besought the tuneful boy
To share with him the pilgrim's holy joy;
And largely promised his return to grace—
Should heaven restore them to their native place—
With gentle fortunes, fitting to reward
The faithful mistress of a faithful bard.
Love's varicous wishes strove in Edward's soul,
As hope and fear alternate bore control;
And while their changing mood, with changing power,
Won his consents that varied every hour,

He promised now to go, and now to stay ;
And still 'twas love that answered yea or nay.
'Twas sad to leave his lady and his dell,
And sad that Lucy in a hut should dwell :
The first was evil that to good might lead,
The last an ill that promised no remede :—
This turned the scale —He went with Lochinvar,
And Lucy wept, at home, the Holy War.

Lucy alone had love for love returned,
Yet many maidens for the minstrel burned.
The red haired Rosa nursed, among the rest,
The baneful poison in her blasted breast.
Hers was the deadliest sting—the fiercest flame—
The palest aspect, and the feeblest frame,
For birth and wealth had raised her haughty soul
Above the reach of reason's calm control,
Till, stung with hopeless love's corroding dart,
The wildest passions eddied round her heart.

Feared by her rivals, flattered by her nurse,
She deemed her love a boon—her hate a curse,
And love—her gracious boon—bestowed in vain,
Subdued her heart, and half subdued her brain.

To baffled love the next degree was hate
For her fair rival, and her happier fate ;
And fatal is a woman's hateful ire,
When fair occasions follow foul desire ;
And fair occasions for an evil deed
Are seldom wanting when the good must bleed ;
For simple goodness, never plotting ill,
Ne'er plans defence against another's will ;
And Lucy fearless of another's arm,
Because her own was never raised for harm,
With Rosa lived in friendship all the while,
Exchanging tear for tear, and smile for smile ;
And quaffed the goblet from her hand, though yet
Its secret juice no other lips had wet.

No lips but Lucy's touched the fatal bowl,
That in a deadly slumber steeped her soul.
—From Rosa's hands the sleepy cup she quaffed,
And felt her spirits brightening o'er the draught.
Strange dreams bewildered all her airy frame,
And new delights—she knew not whence they came ;
Till o'er her limbs resistless languor crept,
And half she seemed awake, and half she slept.
—“ Your eyes are dim,” said Rosa, “ let us walk,
For we have little day, and much to talk,
And all so lovely is the western sky,
'Twill woo the languor from your falling eye.”
Lucy looked up, and saw the dying day
With fresher beauty brightening his decay,
As o'er the Rhyns of Kells he seemed to spread
His golden curtains for his midnight bed,
And weening that the twilight's fragrant gale
Upon her drowsy senses might prevail,
She went with Rosa.—Rosa was her guide ;
And down the Garple's sylvan banks they lied,

Before the sun, with silent stealth, had drawn
From Lowran's peaks his robe of purple lawn.
But little space could Rosa's scheme bestow
To mark from thence the sun's departing glow,
And down she led to Edward's lonely bower,
Where we are spending now the twilight hour.
Here sat they side by side ; and while they sate,
The murmuring waters hastened Lucy's fate ;
For in her ears they sung so sweet a hymn,
Again she languished, and her eyes grew dim ;
Till to the sweet delirium's strong control
The fated maiden yielded all her soul.
—Rosa beheld her smiling in her sleep,
And drove the dreamer headlong down the steep.

JESSIE.

The night is falling—let us quit the dell—
For 'tis a scene of horror—

COLIN.

So it fell—

A sable night—black as a raven's plume—
Without a star to tell of Lucy's doom.
The murderer, shrouded with its pitchy cowl,
Hied homeward, guided by the beagle's howl,
And mingled with her mates.—Anon 'twas spread
That Lucy in the dell was lying dead;
And none to shroud her would the steep descend,
For it was feared she had an evil end.
Yet none of murder talked—for it was known
That, since her Edward to the wars had gone,
Her mind had worn the melancholy mood
Of constant care, that on itself does brood;
And that she oft was seen, at twilight's hour,
To wander hither to her Edward's bower,
Indulging all alone the secret care
That by degrees induc'd dark despair;
And hence, among the neighbours, it was thought
That on her mind the dangerous mood had wrought,
Till, vanquished with the grief that none can mend,
She had in frenzy sought an evil end.

And this belief prevailed, from day to day,
As tales were told of her uncoffined clay,
And evil spirits heard to make their moans,
At dead of night, o'er her unhallowed bones ;
Till none would dare to pass the haunted stream,
Scared by the restless spirit's evil scream ;
For then the sager love they could not share,
With which thy father guides his pastoral care ;
And Rosa's tale an easy sway maintained
On minds, where superstition's midnight reigned.

Years passed away—and from the holy war
The tuneful bard returned with Lochinvar.
The pilgrim's toils had half subdued his frame,
But not his heart, and not his faithful flame ;
For, burning still with all a lover's truth,
He sought the fair companion of his youth.
From bower to bower he went, from scene to scene,
Where she might be, or where she e'er had been,

A gradual truth from silent signs to trace,
'That grief or joy might come with gradual pace;
Avoiding still, with all a lover's care,
The kindred tongues that could her fate declare,
Because he feared to draw from human eye
The look decisive, and the full reply,
That might with sudden stroke his heart assail,
And leave no chances for a happier tale.
But while he questioned lifeless things in vain,
And strained his eye, and toiled his weary brain,
The red haired Rosa to his opening arms,
With faithful passion, offered all her charms.
With friendship's calmer kindness he repaid
The warm caresses of the sanguine maid,
For still a friendly feeling he had proved
For one who loved him, though no love she moved.
But scarce the first caress had warmed their breast,
And mutual looks their meeting joys expressed,
And questions brief of common courtesy past,
How both had fared since they had parted last,

When a cold tremor chilled their warm embrace,
And their dim eyes forsook each other's face,
As if their bosoms wanted strength to bear
The speaking soul that seemed collecting there,—
The one for what he feared to find was true,
The other trembling for the truth she knew.
A pause ensued, so calm with silent fear,
The falling of a dew-drop they might hear,
Till Edward raised again his languid head,
And faltered, in despair, “is Lucy dead?”
Another pause ensued,—as Rosa's blood
Sent through her freezing heart a colder flood;
But strength returned apace, with female arts,
That oft had wrought foul play on stronger hearts—
And, rallying up her wiles, her head she hung,
And o'er her dewy eyes her tresses flung,
And bade him follow to the fatal dell,
Where rocks would utter what she could not tell.
They hied them thither;—side by side they stood,
And side by side the fearful steep reviewed.

“Behold” said Rosa, “where the rocks are red
With Lucy’s blood!—long time has she been dead.
’Tis said she threw herself, in love’s despair,
From the steep rocks—behold her bones are there.”
The minstrel shuddered—Rosa’s brain ran round,
Assailed by phantoms starting from the ground.—
The shining bones their earthly shape renewed—
The clattering skeleton erected stood,
And oped its rusted jaws—

JESSIE.

’Tis midnight dark—
I may not tarry longer—

COLIN.

Nay! but hark!
The spectre’s voice will hold thee—it did cry
“She murdered me—no suicide was I.”
Again the sounding bones asunder burst,
And Rosa felt her withering heart was curst.

Her bosom shuddered—reason lost its rein—
And madness ran careering through her brain.
She laid her palm upon her blasted breast,
And with a maniac's voice her guilt confessed.
—" You doubt my tale," she cried, " O sceptic youth !
Didst thou not hear those bones declare the truth ?"
" I heard them not," the shuddering youth replied—
" O fool ! fool ! fool !— it was a fiend !" she cried,
And plunged into the air ;— the desperate leap
Bore her into the flood, beneath the steep. —
The flood was high—upon its tawny crest
It bore her body to a distant rest,
For it was found upon Dal-Annan's plain,
Staid by the tombstone of a royal Dane,
Who there, beside the Ken's empurpled wave,
Had fought for empire, and had found a grave.
—Without a shroud they left the murderer there—

J' SHEL.

But what became of Edward ?—did despair,
In such an hour, o'ercome him ?

COLIN.

He was one

That might the deed, of which you think, have done ;
For poets' souls, constructed to obey
The lightest touch of passion's silken sway,
Like the fine cloud-works of a summer sky,
That zephyrs mould at will, where'er they fly,
Are ill contrived, in tender life, to prove
The cares and crosses of an ill-starred love ;
Or from the dreams of youth's romantic prime
To lift their eyes on bloodshed and on crime :
But Edward in the Holy Land had been,
And many a grave of Christian saints had seen,
And many a lesson learned of Christian lore,
And many a relic in his bosom wore,
Till saintly resignation's meek control
Against affliction so had manned his soul ;
That Lucy's loss with patient grief he bore,
And did no deed that virtue should deplore.
Yet think not lightly of his bosom's strife ;
It poisoned all the springs of future life ;

To Lucy's poor remains and injured shade,
With pious care the last respects he paid,
But never far'd with kindred men again,
And Gordon's boons were all bestowed in vain.
In vain, with plenty crowned, his cottage rose,
For here he came to seek his soul's repose,
And lived to God, recluse from living men,
The lonely hermit of a lonesome glen.
His harp, that erst had cheered his happier years,
Yet weaned his drooping age from all its tears ;
Till, when subdued with age's last decay,
No more his fingers could its spirit sway,
Upon that sacred bough he hung its strings,
Where now the ivy-shade so closely clings :
And it is said that still the tree retains
The spirit of his harp's enchanting strains ;
For oft when evening's feeble tints decay,
The nighted traveller, on his homeward way,
As o'er the Garple's ivied bridge he lies,
While the cold sweat-drops on his temples rise,

Hears the soft tones of music round him flow,
Winding the mazes of the glen below ;
And charmed alike with pleasure and with dread,
Stands like a statue till the notes are fled,
Then homeward hies, with eager haste to tell
His wondrous stories of the Hermit's Cell.

THE TWO WOODS.

AN ECLOGUE.

— — — — — “ Nor ye who live
In luxury and ease, in pomp and pride,
Think these lost themes unworthy of your ear.”

THOMSON.

THE TWO WOODS.

'TRAVELLER, if e'er upon a summer day,
It may have been thy happy lot to stray
Within that ring of mountains, where the Ken
Journeys her winding way through holm and fen,
Thou must have penciled on thy memory's page,
As a fair scene to think on in thy age,
'That happy spot, where first, with slackened pace,
As if she there had found her resting-place,
She shapes into a lake her placid stream,
Calm as a child that sleeps without a dream ;
And in her bosom first receives the bower-
'That skirt the base of Kenmore's ancient towers,

To give them back in pictures to the eye,
Blent with the bowers and castles of the sky.
And, traveller, if thy pencil has been true,
Two little forests thou wilt oft review,
That fringe the lake with hues of summer green,
And to its centre throw their shady screen.—
One skirts the base of Lowran's granite hill,
Refreshed with dew from many a trickling rill;
And straight across the other throws her veil
Twixt Shirmars' ruins and the western gale.

And long these sister-woods appeared, in truth,
To feel the joy of beauty and of youth,
Till, in a woeiful hour, a bitter doom
Befell them both, and changed their mirth to gloom.
And on a harvest evening, while the dew,
That wont to deck them with their starry hues,
Were trickling down their wrinkled leaves, like tears,
They thus bemoaned their loss of future years.

IOWRAN.

Ah gentle sister ! many a happy day
Together we've put on our green array ;
And many a day together we have thrown
Our garments from us when their green was gone.
Once more together we are doomed to cast
Our summer mantles in an autumn blast ;
But when returning spring, with bounteous dew,
Thy leafy garments shall again renew,
Their green without a rival thou shalt wear,
For ne'er another leaf my boughs shall bear.

SHIRMARS.

Alas ! my sister, not on thee alone
The doom of death has fallen ;—it is my own.
A price is set upon my infant head,
And I must fall before my spring is fled.
In vain I plead my beauty and my youth,
In vain I sue for pity's gentle ruth :

Scarce half thy summers have I lived to see,
And yet my ruin linked with thine must be:
Condemned in very infancy to fall,
I weep to think that I have lived at all.

LOWRAN.

O! yet the doom, that has been rashly made,
May be retracted, and thy death delayed;
But past remede, it is my lot to stand,
A spectacle of wo to all the land—
A living corse—exposed a common show—
One half destroyed—the other left to grow,
Till withering suns, by slow degrees, shall drain
The failing juices from my inmost vein.
But though my lot is now beyond remede,
If thou plead well, thy plea may yet succeed,
When the dull waste that I shall leave behind
May teach its lesson to thy owner's mind.

SHIRMARS.

No hope, alas ! from that suggested thought
To soothe my boding terrors can be brought ;
For he is far away who dooms my harm,
And cannot feel my beauty's distant charm.

LOWRAN.

'Then, sister, let us soothe our present pain
By living o'er our past delights again.

SHIRMARS.

My days have been but few—yet I'll compare
With thine my present, or my former fare.

LOWRAN.

My life has past in pleasure—for since e'er
My tender boughs the cuckoo's weight could bear,
To me her custom it has been to pay
The annual visits of her April day,

And from my boughs with merry notes to sing
The earliest tidings of returning spring ;
Till herd-boys, boastful of her first salute,
Would loiter round my shades in silence mute,
About the wonted time, and as their eye
Was fixed on east, or west, or earth, or sky,
When first her greeting they might chance to hear,
Would read their fortune through the following year ;
Till thus my name became a favourite word
With those who first the cuckoo's tidings heard.

SHIRMAHS.

Not less have I been long the choice resort
Of schoolboys amorous of the sylvan sport ,
For soon as spring restored my green array,
They would, in groups, forsake their homeward way,
To plait their birchen bobs of greenest hue
Within my glades, where greenest birches grew ;
Or from the bough, that bears a slender bark,
Their whistles frame, to match the morning lark ;

Or weave their willow cage with which they strive
The mountain-bees like garden-swarms to hive;
Or polish rods without a crook or splice,
To lure the perch with more refined device;
And ever was my name a sound of joy
With those who boasted any sylvan toy.

LOWRAN.

Yearly to me, as to a wonted home,
When pairing fowls for brooding-shelter roam,
The hooded crow would come—a welcome guest,
And in my bosom build her annual nest;
For o'er her precious charge so green a hue,
At brooding time, my leafy branches threw,
That shepherd boys, ambitious to array
Their cottage windows for a festal day,
With beads of eggs, arranged in motley show,
From nest of sparrow, magpie, rook, or crow,
Would hither hie, intent on sylvan game,
But leave my shades, as empty as they came.

SHIRMARS.

Not yet my stems, which infant years supply
With but an infant strength, have reached so high,
That on my boughs the hooded crow would choose
To risk her brood, when others she can use ;
But to my leafy haunt the billing dove
Has come, attended by her chosen love,
And built her wanted nest within my shade,
Nor e'er has rued the choice she oft has made.

LOWRIAN.

And oft beneath the shadow of my bower,
When mellow eve brings on the lover's hour,
Soon as my boughs, arrayed in summer green,
Can lend the twilight-shade a deeper screen,
The amorous shepherd from his bashful maid
Has stolen her bosom-secret, long delayed,
And won the boon with which a maiden seals
The sweet confession that her tongue reveals ;
For my retreats are so remote and fair,
That lovers here succeed who fail elsewhere.

SHIRMAHS.

And not alone to mortal maids, who sport
With mortal swains, am I the choice resort,
For long the fairy tribe within my bowers
Have played the revel of their midnight hours ;
And blessed my sylvan haunts that I could aid
Their secret sport with such a secret shade.

LOWRAN.

Long time the traveller, when his heart would fail
Beneath the suns that shine without a gale,
Sending his eye along the dusty way,
In search of shelter from the sultry day,
Has blessed my cool retreat, and in my bower
Refreshed his limbs at noon's severest hour,
Bathing his lips and brows with crystal springs
That down my shade the granite mountain flings,
Nor less the peasant, on his ringing car
Driving his winter fuel from afar,

As galled with flies, and sweating with his load,
His jaded steed descends the serpent road,
Blesses the short respite my shades bestow,
And the cool springs that from my bosom flow ;
And, while the thankful beast with fierce desire
At mouth and nostril slakes his inward fire,
Arrays his temples with my branches green,
From biting flies his restless head to screen.

SHIRMAKS.

The tawny mower, at the noon of day,
Has hid his scythe beneath the fragrant hay,
And with the hay-maids, mchug in the sun,
'To my retreats for merry shelter run,
And wrestled out the hour in amorous play,
'Till kieber fell the sun's declining ray ;
And many a swain has blessed the merry glade,
Where first he wrestled with his favourite maid

LOWRAN.

But chief of all it is my pride to tell,
For all my honours I remember well,
How oft the sage philosopher has sought
My grateful refuge from the summer drought,
When he had climbed my hill, beneath the beams
Of burning skies, to search the granite seams,
And pierce earth's womb with philosophic bore,
To teach admiring men the precious lore
In making worlds what system God employs,
That man may make again when God destroys.
Lord, Doctor, Baronet—a sacred band,
Compass in pouch, and hammer in their hand,
To my retreats they came, when from the earth
Their crows had dug the secret of her birth,
And, grouped on heath beneath my greenest bough—
Forefinger now on palm, and now on brow
Conversed of Renovation and Decay ;—

SHIRMARS.

Of us, O sister ! did they nothing say,
Whether, when men our present life have ta'en,
We may receive another ?

LOWRAN.

Nothing plain.

Unto the bottom of the sea we go,
And fires again shall drive us from below ;
But whether in the shape of trees again
We may return, I strove to learn in vain.

SHIRMARS.

It boots me little, since before my day
I may again be hewn, and pass away.

LOWRAN.

And little smc—ince in a future death
I might with more reluctance yield my breath,

Because a bliss is in my present gloom
That never might console a future doom.

SHIRMARS.

O tell me what that secret bliss may be !
For I have none but to rejoice with thee.

LOWRAN.

Sister, I tell thee I have lived for good,
And all my life has been a happy mood ;
But while the poor man's cot was in decay,
And lent no shelter from the winter day,
While pale disease his naked couch assailed,
Because the storm upon his roof prevailed,
It was not meet that for a summer show,
To please an idle fancy, I should grow ;
And thus the man to whom the poor complain,
And never left an honest prayer in vain ;
From whom the wronged receive the rights of law,
And bold oppression shrinks with trembling awe ;

Has doomed my fall, that o'er his fair domain
May rural health, and cottage-comfort reign.
And when the hind has seen his cot arise—
A sure defence against the winter skies,
If to the merchant my remains be sold,
The widow, pensioned from the trafficked gold,
Shall in her prayers remember him who bade
'The woodman rob the traveller of my shade.

And hence where'er extends my owner's sway
A heart-consoling picture I survey :
The peasant toiling in his little farm
Secures his future age from fortune's harm,
Because his rents are easy – such as well
His crop or cattle at the term can tell,
With something o'er in fund or bank to lay,
Or great man's hands, against a future day.
Or if with losses prest, and evil times,
A harder steep some toiling tenant climbs,

Till age comes on him when his lease is o'er,
And want presents a hopeless waste before,
A cottage free, and pasture for a cow,
Are what his landlord's generous cares allow,
With haply some apportioned plot of ground,
Which other plots of other poor surround.
And 'tis, in harvest months, a pretty show,
To see their crops in motley colours grow :
One has his rood of wheat, and one his oats,
And some their lint, and some their clover-plots ;
And here potatoes, barley there is seen,
Arranged, with no invidious fence between ;
Till like a rainbow seems the painted ground,
Its hues distinct, and yet without a bound.

Not less I love to hear the hymn of praise
That grateful widows for their pensions raise,
As from the town to Kennere's towers they come .
Some by the year, or month, and weekly come,

To claim the boon that charity bestows
To wean declining age from half its woes.

SHIRMARS.

Ah sister ! sure a happy lot is thine ;
But still without a comfort I repine.
It may be that my infant price shall go
To add fresh glitter to a gala-show,
In distant towns where giddy pleasure reigns,
And landlords riot on the peasant's pains ;
But I have little hope that, when I die,
One widow's breast shall heave a shorter sigh,
Or peasant's heart beat lighter than before,
Though not a tree be left on all my shore ;
For different far the picture I survey
From that which makes thy happy shore so gay.
—Here racked with rents that all his care and toil
Can never force from his ungrateful soil,
The struggling swain, whose unavailing strife
Is but for daily sustenance and life,

Bound to a lease, that, with his little skill,
He thought to match by joining good to ill,
Still hoping better times, and slow to rue,
Bears up his courage for a year or two,—
His frame, the while, assuming, day by day,
A sparer habit, and a worse array ;
Till prest with bills, and in arrears of rent,
His shifts exhausted, and his substance spent,
At that fair season when the happy swain
Marks the first tinge of gold upon his grain,
He sees the Factor sorrowful at heart,
And Auctioneer that almost hates his part,
By public criers, or by printed bills,
Gathering the people on his laboured hills,
To sell his precious plots of colouring grain
For any price that public sales obtain.
His cattle follow next ;—from park and stall
He leads them forward at the crier's call,
The mare that wont, in better days, to bear
His daughter spruce to sacrament or fair,

The prancing foal that was the children's pet,
And the tame goat that flaxen shackles fret,—
Sheep, bullock, cow, and calf,—a motley show—
By random lots, for half their worth they go,
Until the landlord has no further dues,
Or till the tenant has no more to lose.
His lease, again exposed to public sale,
Lures other swains to ruin and to jail ;
Like tide succeeding tide they come and go,
One ebbing still to let another flow ;
Till half the peasantry, renowned before
For honest industry and simple lore,
Are driven for sustenance to frauds and crimes,
Hopeless of better means, or happier times ;
And for the jockey's change the peasant's name,
Redeeming fortune, but renouncing fame.

So spake the mournful wood, and as she spake
The music of the morn began to wake.

She would have spoken on ; for rage and grief
In fluent utterance found a short relief ;
But down her sister's shore the woodmen came
With hatchets gleaming in the golden flame
That from the windows of the orient broke,
And to the forest's roots they laid the stroke
That robbed the granite hill of all its green,
And checked the sisters' plaints, and closed the scene.

MORAN AND EVELINE,

A

BALLAD.

“ Idem omnibus amor.”

MORAN AND EVELINE.

FAIR Eveline was not divine

Because her cheeks were red,
And seemed to sight two roses bright,
Set in a lily bed ;

Nor yet because so bright and blue
Were her inspiring eyes ;
Like shining drops of crystal dew
That on a blue-bell lies :

But Eveline was fair to sight
Because her colours passed
From white to red, and red to white,
So frequent and so fast ;

And Eveline was called divine
Because her gentle eyes,
So moist and clear, beneath a tear,
Could shine for others' sighs ;

For sympathy was in her heart
With every fate to fare ;
Among the gay to take her part,
Or with the sad to share.

And ever when her tears were flowing,
They made the merry sad ;
And when again her smiles were glowing
They made the mournful glad.

Yet there was one romantic boy—
A child of wayward moods,
Who lived remote from men of joy—
A hermit of the woods ;

And never to his way would he

Could Evelyn so true

A moment of joy might

To wean him from his true love,

For deep within his breast he

The poison of love's power,

And all for one in high degree

Who could not be his murderer.

For he, to humble fortune bred,

A hamper fate did share,

While she in princely halls was fed

Upon a princely fate.

His lips when dry, and fountains melt,

In running streams were dipped;

While Eveline the rosy wine

From golden goblets sipped.

But ye that are of high degree
Forbear this youth to blame,
That bold and venturous was he,
To love so high a dame ;

For little he in truth did ween,
When first he thought of love,
That he so far below had been,
Or she so far above.

For first in rural robes arrayed
He spied her on the green,
All simple as a village-maid,*
That milking ewes had been.

Then taken by her gentle frame,
And by her gentler air,
He could not check the tender flame
That wrought his future care :

And though he knew that on his head

The wrath of kin he drew,

If one so humble he should wed,

He felt he could not rue.

The next time at a wedding-feast,

In merry company,

He saw the maid a wedding-guest,

With men of high degree ;

Her gentle fingers they were bright

With many a costly stone ;

And dazzled with the diamond's light

Her yellow ringlets shone.

The youth, in simple garments clad,

Their glittering beams beheld ;

And felt his cheek grow warm and red,

And all his hopes repelled.

The next time on a steed whose mane
Was like a waterfall,
She rode with pages in her train
Who answered to her call.

She rode the leafy forest through,
Where Moran went to stray,
Till evening cast her crystal dew
Upon her woodland way.

But Moran still, with struggling will,
Would shun her sparkling eye,
Afraid to brook a lofty look
From one so fair and high ;

And to his myrtle bower would go,
With absence to allay
The grief that leads to greater wo,
When left to take its sway.

And with the musings of his mind,
That once were light as air,
His bosom he had half resigned
His bitter lot to bear ;

Till Eveline, upon a day
When she went out to roam,
Had wandered in her woody way,
And could not find her home.

She wandered on from glade to glade,
From copse to copse she went,
Till gloomy grew the sylvan shade,
As if the day were spent.

And further still she wandered on,
With thorns and briars torn,
'Till to a narrow path, anon,
Her winding steps were borne.

The thorns and briars flourished still,
With roses white and red ;
But they had owned a master's skill,
And arched above her head.

And all her path, on either side,
With summer flowers was fringed,
And some with white and blue were died,
And some with red were tinged.

For hyacinths, and jessamines,
And daffodils were there,
And amaranths and columbines
To scent the summer air.

And all around, and all above,
Where'er she turned her ear,
A music full of life and love
It was her joy to hear ;

For singing-birds on every bush
Were flitting to and fro,
The robin, linnet, and the thrush,
That live without a wo

A rill united with their song,
As down its flowery way
It twinkled joyously along
In all the mirth of May.

And up the rill fair Eveline
The narrow path pursued,
For with the stream it seemed to twine
Its wreaths around the wood.

And on she went, till o'er her blent
A deeper shadow still;
And on he flew, till greener grew
The banks upon the rill;

And now, amid the shade, she heard

A note that did not seem

To come from any singing-bird,

Nor yet from any stream ;

Because the air was in its tone

That human lips bestow,

And seemed to mould its plaintive moan

Unto a human wo.

And Eveline the note pursued,

Till on the streamlet's side,

Where richer blossoms clothed the wood,

A summer bower she spied.

And there upon a mossy bed

Within that summer bower,

That on his golden ringlets shed

Its roses like a shower,

She saw the pensive Moran laid,
Like one devoid of care,
Though on his flageolet he played
A melancholy air.

His flowing locks were loosely shed
Upon his neck and breast,
And mingled with the roses red
That spotted all his vest.

And still his mournful air he played,
Till Eveline drew nigh ;
But when he spied the lovely maid
A mist came o'er his eye ;

And from his hand with sudden start
His flageolet he dropped,
And in his breast, and in his heart
The vital current stopped.

“ Now, gentle knight,” the lady said,

“ Thy pardon I do pray,

That thus unto thy myrtle shade,

I come at twilight grey ;

“ For through the shade my feet have strayed

By chance into thy bower ;

Now tell me, pray, the nearest way

Unto my father’s tower.”

A hue came over Moran’s face

That made the rose look white ;

And through the wood, with trembling pace,

He led the maid aright.

Arigh he led from shade to shade,

Till at her father’s tower

A sweet good-night the lady bade,

And he regained his tower.

The lady had a sweet repose,
But not on her it fell,
For in her heart, that night, arose
The flame that none can quell.

She saw the vesper star arise,
But could not taste its calm ;
And midnight fell upon her eyes
Without its wonted balm.

And when the morning light arose
Upon the eastern sky,
Her heart was still without repose,
And sleepless was her eye.

And when assembled, one and all,
Around their morning fare,
She met her kindred in the hall.
Their mirth she could not share ;

But to her little page she cried

“ Go rein two milk-white steeds,
For thou, to-day, with me, must ride
Along the flowery meads :”

And o’er the flowery meads she rode,

And through the sylvan glade ;
Until she reached the rill that flowed
From Moran’s myrtle shade.

Upon the crystal rill she gazed,

And on its flowery fringe ;
But marked, before her eye she raised,
It had a purple tinge.

“ Now tell me, little page,” she cried,

“ Dost thou that streamlet view ?
And tell me, is its crystal died
With any purple hue ?”

“ The crystal stream is flowing bright”

The page did then reply,

“ But yet, if I discern aright,

It has a purple dye.”

“ Now hold my steed, while up the rill

I run,” said Eveline,

“ Because I cannot rest until

Its tincture I divine.”

And upward still she traced the rill,

And still its colour viewed ;

And deeper grew its purple hue

The further she pursued ;

Till stretched upon his mossy bed,

Bestrewed with many a flower,

She saw her Moran lying dead,

And staining all his bower ;

For from his bosom, red and warm,
A little rill was streaming ;
And in his fingers, full of harm,
A little blade was gleaming.

And all his features bore the hue
Of melancholy wildness,
Though still his face was fair to view,
And full of former mildness.

And on his bower with many a flower
Was written, o'er his head,
“ For Eveline my heart did pine,
And now for her has bled.”

The lady looked upon his face,
And looked upon his flowers ;
Then backward hied with trembling pace,
Unto her father's towers.

But never to her cheek again

Returned the rosy hue ;

And every lover sued in vain,

That for her hand did sue.

For now to dwell in cloister-cell

She fled from human folly ;

And Evcline was called divine

Because her life was holy.

GILDEROY,

A BALLAD.



“ O STAY me not ! thou mother dear,

“ One hour is all I pray,

That I may pay my parting tear,

Unto my Mary’s clay ;

“ For cruel ones, that did us part,

Her chilling bed have made,

And on her breast and broken heart

The heavy turf have laid.

“ I’ll see where they have hid her clay
Beneath the lonely yew ;
And all my prayer is but to stay
Till I have said adieu.”

“ O go not ! go not, gentle boy,
You must not go from me,
For now I have but Gilderoy,
I have but only thee.”

§ He waited for the sleeping hour,
He watched her eyes grow weary,
Then, led by love’s disastrous power,
Stole to the churchyard dreary.

But who a mother’s fears can tell ?
She followed o’er the dew ;
And, far before her, knew him well,
Beneath the lonely yew.

His last adieu she heard him say
In broken sobs and sighs ;
And saw him fall to kiss the clay,
But never saw him rise.

His mother's joy was Gilderoy,
When other joys were gone ;
Now death has ta'en her darling boy,
And she is left alone.

THE HEADACH.



I GAINED a boon, my aching head
To lean on Lucy's breast,
Well weening that so soft a bed
Might cradle it to rest.

And all the while my burning brow
With balmy breath she fanned ;
And aye my temples, to and fro,
Stroked with her silken hand ;

And o'er my cheek her tresses flung,
To save me from the sun ;
And told me tales, and ballads sung,
Till all her songs were done.

And she did pity me, and melt
 To think upon my pain ;
And ever asked me how I felt,
 And sighed, and asked again ;

Till quite enchanted and subdued,
 The pain forsook my head ;
But, oh the cure that I have rued !
 Into my heart it fled.

'THE FAIRIES,

A BALLAD.

O TELL me whose courser, all harnessed so bright,
Is led to yon stall by the yellow moonlight !
For red are his sides with the spur and the lash,
And his teeth the white foam from the bridle-bit dash ;
A mantle of mist has enveloped him round,
And slowly he walks with his eye on the ground :
A field has been lost, and a kingdom been won,
Ere ever poor charger so much was undone.

The steed may recover ; but never again
His rider shall rule him with lash or with rein,
For bright was the moon when he rode through the grove,
Where the fairies were met for the revels of love ;

And the gleam of his eye, and the gold of his hair,
And the rose of his cheek, that was blooming and bare,
Attracted the fairies with whoop and halloo,
Through forest and valley the boy to pursue.

Through forest and valley the boy they pursued,
He gained in the plain, and they gained in the wood,
Till through the deep river his courser he spurred,
And the whoop of the fairies no longer he heard.
But when he had mastered the forest and flood,
His visage was robbed of its bloom and its blood ;
And soon as the hall of his kindred he won,
He bade them lament, for his race it was run.

SONG.



Now carè may gaze on the queen of night,
While we are met by the taper's light,
And red and bright in the goblets shine
The rosy hues of the balmy wine.

But the wine is dull as the running stream
That cools the hind in the summer beam,
If friendship flow not with the bowl
From lip to lip, and from soul to soul.

'Then bright and red let the goblet flow,
And health and pleasure on him bestow

Who hallows the boon of the balmy vine
With friendship warm as the kindling wine.

But bathe the cup to its silver brim,
And drink with a warmer draught to him
Whose truth and love shall live to-morrow,
When the wine-cup's warmth they cannot borrow.

TO CHLOE.

IN THE MANNER OF SHAKESPEARE.



I.

COME, blooming maiden, lend me thy white hand
And I will lead thee where love waits thy coming;
For he a bower so full of sweets has planned,
That bees around it hang for ever humming;
And still they suckle their delicious fare
From honey-flowers that bloom so bountifully there.

II.

Then come, my love, and from those fair flowers take
A lesson how to yield thy lips to plunder;

And I those bees will my instructors make
In sucking all their sweets before we sunder;
For they do teach that May-flowers, growing old,
Will soon no honey have to give or to withhold.

III.

See how that tree, longing its wealth to lose,
Seems wooing us to pluck its ripened cherries,
As if the mellow fruit it bade us use,
Ere time have sucked the rich juice from its berries :
'Thou art a cherry-tree ripe berries bearing,
Then spare not what will waste in spite of all thy sparing.

IV.

Behold those brambles all so richly crowned,
How sore they tempt the babe with sights of pleasure;
But fenced with briars his little hands to wound,
They rudely bar him from the guarded treasure;
'Till, with a few more suns their moisture wasted,
A loathsome sight they show, by living lips untasted.

V.

So, blooming maiden, shall it fare with thee,

 If thou wilt longer bar my lips from thine ;

For time will ravish what thou savest from me,

 Doubling the loss by making 't also mine :

Then come, my love, and yield thy lips' sweet treasure,

While yet it is with them the harvest-time of pleasure.

FRAGMENT

OF A POEM, ENTITLED

THE CRIME, TRIAL, AND PUNISHMENT,
OF SHEPHERD COLIN.

IN THREE CANTOS.

IN THE MANNER OF SPENSER.

CANTO I.

The shepherd swain that climbed a tree
To plunder a dove's nest;
And of a sight he there did see
That plundered him of rest.

I.

A GENTLE rill that had for journey come
Through lonely moors, where little beauty dwells,
Save the sweet bee making its amorous hum
Around the maiden blush of heather-bells,
Through whose brown fringe the crystal fountain wells,
Now in a glen, for its own pastime made,
Enamoured of a hundred sweets delayed.

II.

Even here it tarried after long turmoil,
Late restless visitor from scene to scene,
Now loving rest, and loathing further toil,
As if a Christian pilgrim it had been
Through dreary lands, and this were Palestine.—
Ah happy stream ! many would envy thee,
If I could tell them all that thou didst see.

III.

Its bed was overlaid with precious sand,
Whereof some shone like silver, some like gold,
And some seemed diamonds brought from Indian land,
That it was fair and tempting to behold ;
And over them so calm the streamlet rolled,
That it did seem conceited with the pleasure
Of showing unto all its goodly treasure.

IV.

Fast by its margin dight in freshest flowers,
Spotting the green with yellow, red, and blue,

The forest arched itself in rosy bowers,
That o'er the pool a shadowy mantle threw,
Marring the prying sun's licentious view,
That thither might no thievish eye be sent
To spy the streamlet's secret merriment.

V.

For to a sweet dysport that happy pool
By happy playmates long had been devoted,
Till on a day (ah day of bitter dool!)
A shepherd swain to evil hap allotted,
Climbed a tall tree, where he a dove's nest noted,
Having propense each slender neck to twist,
Nor ever of his own disaster wist.

VI.

But ere his murderous fingers he had laid
Upon the poor birds plaining piteously,
A dainty song to daintier music made
Assailed his ear with heavenly melody,
Yet all around no shepherd might he see ;

Whereat of fairy land he him bethought,
And blessed the lot that had him thither brought.

VII.

Anon a sudden glory caught his eye,
As if it were the sun's bewildering shene
Starting from clouds into the naked sky,
And through the shadow of the branches green,

* * * * *

MONODY

ON THE DEATH OF J. H——H.



I know, beloved child, that thou
Art sleeping in thy grave-sheets now,
 Upon an earthy bed ;
Yet, in my reveries and dreams,
A thing impossible it seems
 To think that thou art dead.

For thou wert all so full of life,
So fitted for the constant strife
 Of merriment and play,
So full of blood, and full of flame,
I fancied thine an earthly frame
 That age alone could sway.

Thine eyes they were so bold and bright,
So full of motion and of light,
Methinks I see them still ;
Inspiring gladness with their glow,
They haunt my heart where'er I go,
Without or with my will.

At morn or eve, at night or noon,
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
On mountain or on plain,
By glassy lake, or silver stream,
I have of thee a constant dream,
The tenant of my brain.

And often in my musing hours,
When I am plucking summer flowers
From meadows of delight,
And weaving garlands for my friends,
Before the winter storm descends
To sweep them from my sight,

I pluck for thee, from nature's vest,
A garland fairer than the rest
Thy fairer form to grace ;
And then it is my joy to see
The richest flowers that feed the bee
Contending with thy face.

And pleasure lights my heart the while,
'To think how sweetly thou wilt smile
To wear a wreath so wild :
All this I do, while in my mirth
I fancy still that on the earth
'Thou art a living child.

But fancy's bliss is but a dream
That at the light of reason's beam
For ever melts away ;
And leaves my heart as cold as lead,
When I remember thou art dead
And sleeping in the clay.

And now as oft my musings meet

Some relic ready to repeat

That thou art dead and gone—

Thy ashen sword and hazel bow,

Thy book of Byron and Crusoe

Deserted and alone.

The little steed that thou wert wont

To spur, to rein, to wheel, and front,

In mimicry of glory,

Forsaken wanders o'er the plain,

Without a saddle or a rein,

As if to tell thy story.

And o'er the fields, and through the town,

In merry squadrons up and down,

The happy children play ;

But one is wanting in their game

Of gentler speech, and finer frame,

And comelier array.—

—To mortal man it is not given
To question the decrees of heaven,
Yet to a human mind
Thy lot a darksome riddle seems—
A mystery in nature's schemes—
That cannot be defined.

For sure thou hadst on earth a heart
Contrived to act a noble part
When ripened into man,
If I, who loved thy life to read,
In childish thought, the manly deed
Aright can ever scan.

But though we trace the future man,
The future lot we cannot scan ;
And who on earth may know
But that a Being full of love
Has called thee to delights above
To shun distress below ?

For though, on earth, a circle fair
Of gentle friends, with constant care,
On thee for ever tended ;
Yet mortal gifts are full of fate,
And have on earth a doubtful date,
With fear and trouble blended.

Now thou hast friends that never die ;
And if thou needest nature's tie
To league them with thy heart,
Sister and brothers yet are thine—
A family of saints divine, ²
That never more shall part.

POETS.

'THERE is a mystery in poets' moods
That they will write, and write, and still write on,
Yet rail against their art as profitless,
And full of vanity ;—strange contradiction
Making thereby between their words and deeds.
—They are like schoolboys nutting in a wood,
That, having found a rich and golden tree,
To hide it from their fellows, as they feast
Upon its precious treasure, cry the while,
With whining voice and piteous discontent,
That 'tis a waste of time to tarry there,
So profitless and barren is the wood ;
And cozening thus their mates, unto themselves
They make their plunder a monopoly.

DOMESTIC HARMONY.

DOMESTIC ties are boons from heaven
To man, in love and mercy given,
To soothe mortality;
And cursed are they, who for the sake
Of earthly passions, seek to break
Domestic harmony.

But not a curse will she bestow,
For whom my duteous numbers flow;
And to her patient grief
I mould my feelings and my will,
And pray the Powers, that love her still,
To give her heart relief.

For she is bathed with virgin tears,
And bloomless in her spring of years,
As if her spring were by ;
Young is she, and her heart is mild,
Yet care has made her brow look wild,
And settled in her eye.

I found her when my heart was glad
With youth and joy ; but her's was sad,
And seemed to me like madness
In one so beautiful and young,
So sore her lily hands she wrung,
With more than mortal sadness.

But to her tale she made me listen,
Until my eye began to glisten ;
And when her tale was sung,
No more it seemed to me a thing
Of wonderment, that she should wring
A hand so fair and young,—

She sitteth by her father's hearth ;
But there is not in all the earth
So desolate a spot ;
For she has kin, and loves them all,
But cold on her their looks do fall,
As if they own'd her not.

They loved her once, for she was mild,
And was a most obedient child,
As ever child could be ;
But when her years were ripe, they strove
With avarice to cross her love
That nature had made free.

'Twas not a movement of the will,
Or she had been obedient still ;
But ever from that day,
When her reluctant heart she told,
Her father's looks are chilling cold,
Like one not made of clay.

Now care has settled in her eye
With wildness like a fantasy,
And all her bloom is gone,
Because beside her father's hearth
She sits a stranger to his mirth,
Unnoticed and alone.

O sow the seeds of mercy there,
Ye guardians of the virtuous fair,
From your celestial store !
That nature on the hearth may reign,
And love and mercy smile again,
Where they have smiled before.

TO A SOLDIER

MORTALLY WOUNDED.

SOLDIER, thou hast bravely faced
Foes with deadly weapons braced ;
Now thy blood is flowing fast,
And must drain thy heart at last ;
For around the spear it flows
From a vein that cannot close.
—Oh how like thy lot is mine !
For with courage bold as thine,
To a ball I lately hied
And a host of charms defied.
Swift at once around me flew
Arrows dipped in deadly dew,

Through my naked eyes they entered,
In my naked heart they centered ;
Till, like thee, compelled to yield,
I forsook the fatal field.

Now alike is all our wo,
Save the floods that from us flow ;
Fitting our respective spears—
Thine is blood and mine is tears.

—Both our currents from us burst
Where our weapons entered first ;
From thy wounded side is thine,
From my wounded eyes is mine ;
Both are flowing from the heart,
Both defy the surgeon's art.

Can we yet resemble more
Ere the final strife be o'er !

Yes, unhappy soldier, yes,
We resemble yet in this—

Thou dost wish my lot were thine,
I am wishing thine were mine.

Thou dost swear, and so do I,
For by all yon starry sky,
Gladly I would change my smart
For the quiet of thy heart.

CHILDE ———'s REVERIE.

ANOTHER year, or two, or three,
Among the merry crowd with thee,
My brother I should spend,
While yet my life is in its spring,
And summer's hours are on the wing
Impatient to descend.

But while I play my merriest part,
I have a plot within my heart
To steal away from thee,
And all my friends—a faithful band,
To wander on from land to land,
And on from sea to sea.

From sea to sea, and shore to shore,
Where ne'er my foot has been before,
And ne'er shall be again,
It is my wish to wander on,
Arrive, behold them, and be gone,
Without a parting pain.

Yet say not that I seek to go
From line to line of polar snow,
And on from east to west,
Because my love is small for thee,
Or less than thou bestowest on me,
Though it were all confess.

If aught on earth could hold me here,
Or check my choice, it were the fear
Of leaving thee behind ;
But there's a blank within my breast,
A want that will not let me rest,
In body or in mind.

It is a blank, a fearful nought,
A void of feeling and of thought,
Where once, in days of mirth,
The brightest image dwelt that e'er
A heart of human mould could bear,
And live upon the earth.

And scarce a heart of human mould
I fancied mine, it grew so bold
With fantasies divine,
And lofty visions of delight,
Because unto an angel bright,
It weened itself the shrine.

She was the angel of my dreams,
Of all my hopes, and all my schemes,
And all my wishes dear,
For her alone with constant mind
My plans of pleasure were designed
For many a future year.

I saw my cot beneath her care
Through bays and hollies peeping fair,
In some serene recess ;
And saw my myrtle arbours grow,
Where linnets sing, and fountains flow,
In melodies of bliss. ♣

While in my plans myself I viewed
Among the warblers of the wood,
A rival of their fate,
Tuning with words of silver sound
The thoughts that in my mind abound,
To sing them to my mate.

My dream has fled ; and dearly I
Deserved that such a dream should fly,
For in my pleasure's pride,
While it retained its strong control,
I banished from my heart and soul
All human thoughts beside.

Now it has left a blank behind,
That all the workings of my mind,
In vain combine to fill;
For while my fancy tries her flights,
And memory kindles past delights,
My heart is empty still.

And though it oft has spurned at pain,
And made misfortune's arrows vain,
It needs a constant motion
Its inward emptiness to bear,—
A constant change of sky and air,
A change of earth and ocean.

SONNETS.

" In truth, the prison unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is ; and hence to me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound,
Within the sonnet's scanty plot of ground."

WORDSWORTH.

The Sonnets in the following little collection are designed after the model of the Italian and Spanish poets. I warn the Reader of this merit, lest he may discover no other. Their mechanism is difficult, and has been adopted by few English writers. Many fine enough poems have been written upon new models, under the original name ; but they want the principal characteristic of the Sonnet—the adaptation of its measures and rhymes to the unity of its thought.

SONNET I.

TO A GENTLEMAN.

OLD man, although my enemy thou be,
Sad when I smile, and merry when I mourn,
And scorning me as not of woman born,
Yet my mysterious soul is unto thee
Bound with strange links of secret amity,
That when I would return thee scorn for scorn,
And tear the heart by whom my own is torn,
Honour and love it pays thee back from me.
O! is it for the down my young cheek wears
That in thy judgment I am so reviled?
Or is it in the whiteness of thy hairs,
That I am of my just revenge beguiled?
Old man, 'tis not in these, but in the cares
That move each heart towards thy darling child.

SONNET II.

TO A LADY.

At length, fair maiden, I have come to say
The slow adieu that thou so oft hast prayed,
And I so long with lingering hope delayed,
Prolonging still my disobedient stay,
When it behoved thy peace that far away,
From any haunt of thine, I should have strayed.
Now pardon me that I have disobeyed,
And I will quit thy dangerous bowers for aye :
Nor will I rest till far between us flow
The dreary waves of an invidious sea,
Since they who rule thy fate will have it so :
But pardon, gentle lady, that in me
Its utmost length obedience cannot go ;
For my poor heart must loiter still with thee.

SONNET III.

TO THE MOON.

FAIR moon, that, though reposing all the while,
Still walkest thy journey through the heavenly deep,
Seeming a dreamer travelling in thy sleep,
Many bright eyes look up to thee and smile,
For thou hast beauty that can them beguile,
And in sweet reveries their senses steep :
Yet when I look upon thy light I weep,
And almost in my heart thy charms revile ;
For once enchanted with the glorious light
Of beauty's smile, in happier moments won,
I weened my golden day should have no night ;
And now beholding that its race is run,
Thou seemest, O dismal spectre ! to my sight
The pale cold ghost of my departed sun.

SONNET IV.

TO A GIRL IN CONSUMPTION.

TELL me, my dearest, in what baneful bower
You sat ; and under what distempered sky ;
And what infectious plants were growing nigh ;
At chilly morn, or dewy evening's hour ;
At noon, or midnight ; in the sun or shower,
When thou wert poisoned so ; and gladly I
Unto that self same bower my steps will hie,
To drink, like healing balm, its baneful power.
'Tis sweet to sit where thou hast sat before ;
But other charm has that same bower to me ;
It stole away thy joy, 'twill mine restore ;
Thy bane it was, my antidote 'twill be ;
For life is death to me when thine is o'er ;
And death is life if I may go with thee.

SONNET V.

WRITTEN ON THE BURIAL-GROUND OF MY ANCESTORS.

NEVER, O ! never on this sacred ground
Can I let fall my eye, but it will gaze,
As if no power again its beam could raise,
To look on aught above, or all around ;
And aye upon the greenest, oldest mound,
That lies on those who lived in earliest days,
To me the most unknown, it most delays,
With strongest spell of strange enchantment bound.
Sure not for those whom I did never know
Can I let fall so big and sad a tear ;
No ; 'tis the foretaste of a future wo ;
The oldest grave receives the soonest bier ;
It is not for the dead my tears do flow ;
But for the living that must soon lie here.

NOTES.

NOTES
TO THE
LEGEND OF IONA.

CANT. I.—St. I. p. 3.

*If thou be one of a merry mood,
Tread not upon Iona's isle,
For it will chill thy dancing blood,
And rob thee of thy rosy smile.*

THERE is a prettiness in the white shells and the precious stones which distinguish the shores of Icolmkill from the neighbouring islands; for it abounds in pebbles, jasper, granite, and marble, of the finest qualities. There is also a beauty in the singular intermixture of barrenness and fertility which characterises its surface; for it is striped,

from one end to the other, with small ridges of naked rock, and little green valleys, in a manner peculiar to itself. Yet these peculiarities are rather the beauties which the mind traces for its own relief, after search and meditation, from general vacuity, than the striking and spontaneous features of a beautiful landscape, and he who leaves the Lowlands with the hope of regaling his taste in Iona with either the sublime or the beautiful, will return as much disappointed and chagrined, as the Cockney did from Staffa, after finding that it did not stand upon pillars, in the same manner as his card-table stood on its feet. The interest and expression of the island must depend entirely on the mind which surveys it; for the ruins themselves, with all their ornaments, are surpassed in dignity and grandeur by many others, which many travellers would pass without an emotion. It is to their antiquity and remoteness, and the piety of their ancient inhabitants, that the ruins of Iona owe that celebrity which has so long distinguished them from

all others ; for it is impossible to contemplate their venerable fragments, and remember their history, without an emotion of melancholy and holiness, which few other spots in the world can inspire. The island has long been sacred. The Druids are said to have had a college there, from which the island had its name “ Inish Druinish ” (the island of the Druids) before the time of St Columba ; and after that saint, it remained in the possession of his pious successors, with little interruption, from the sixth century till the time of the reformation. Its inhabitants entertain the belief, that its ancient glory shall yet be restored, for which they quote the authority of St Columba, in the following distich :

“ An I mo chridhe I mo ghraidh

An aite guth manaich bidh geum bà ;

Ach mun tig an saoghal gu crìch

Bithidh I mar a bha.”

implying that the monastery, after ages of ruin and neglect, shall again be the retreat of piety and learn-

ing. This sentiment seems to have struck Dr Johnson without any knowledge of Columba's prophecy. "Perhaps, in the revolutions of the world, Iona may be some time again the instructress of the western regions." *Journey to the Hebrides*.

It is to these fine associations alone that I am willing to ascribe the celebrity of Icolatkill. Yet other travellers seem to have been captivated by its natural beauties, as well as by the architecture of the buildings. Mr Pennant speaks of the island as follows: "The view of Iona was very picturesque: the east side, or that which bounds the sound exhibited a beautiful variety; an extent of plain, a little elevated above the water, and almost covered with the ruins of the sacred buildings, and with the remains of the old town still inhabited." His description of the ruins is equally enthusiastic, to which I refer the reader, as they are too long for being inserted here. See his *Tour in Scotland*, Vol. II. p. 277.

St. II. p. 4.

Fragments of many a Christian cross.

According to Mr Sacheverell, there were 360 crosses standing in Iona at the Reformation. A few of these have escaped the piety of the reformers, of which Maclean's is the most elegant. "It seems to have been customary in Scotland for individuals to erect crosses, probably in consequence of some vow, or perhaps out of a vain hope of perpetuating their memory,"—*Pennant*.

St. II. p. 4.

——— *Wrecks sublime*

That tell to man the march of time.

"——— When yonder spheres sublime
Pealed their first notes to sound the march of time."

Pleasures of Hope.

*

St. II. p. 4.

*Then, if one guilty thought thou hast,
O blessed soul ! that hour is its last,*

For never from a spot so holy

May a soul like thine bear earthly folly.

Lest my readers should be suspicious of poetical enthusiasm and partiality, I may remind them of Dr Johnson's famous illustration of the same emotions.

"We were now treading that illustrious island, which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge, and the blessings of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible, if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish, if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me and my friends be such frigid philosophy, as may conduct us, indifferent and unmoved, over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied

whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona." Again, "We now left those illustrious ruins, by which Mr Boswell was much affected, nor would I willingly be thought to have looked upon them without some emotion."

St. III. p.

There is a stone so old and grey,

And sunk so far beneath the clay.

The tombstones are laid flat on the ground, and some of the most ancient are sunk so far beneath it, as to be almost invisible.

St. V. p. 2.

My stake a cypress, or a bay.

The reader who has heard of books falling dead-born from the press, and who remembers that the cypress was the emblem anciently used at funerals, will perceive the appropriateness of its application here.

St. VII. p. 8.

I have the ambition to hope that, in this stanza, and in a few more passages throughout the romance, the reader will recognize the style of Mr Wilson's *Isle of Palms*, one of the richest and most original poems that has appeared in the present generation. I should, in good policy, have avoided mentioning this circumstance, as it must expose my own poetry to a dangerous comparison; but, having read the *Isle of Palms*, I could not resist the temptation of writing a few verses in the same manner; and having written them, I feel it unjust to assume to myself the merit which belongs to Mr Wilson.

St. IX. p. 10.

The inward motion of a bay, &c. &c.

As the reader will meet, in the next Canto, (see St. XXII. p. 54,) with descriptions of a scene in the same island, as rough as ~~this is~~ soft, I think it necessary to warn him against the criticism of con-

sidering them inconsistent ; as a striking intermixture of the beautiful and the sublime, or the gentle and the terrible, is one of the peculiarities of Hebridean scenery. It is no uncommon thing, among these interesting islands, to meet with quiet bays, terminating in voluptuous caves floored with white shells, and screened with honeysuckle and ivy ; and, after turning the next prominence, to behold the perpetual battle of the elements mauling the island into precipices and chasms, that almost stupify the mind which beholds them.

St. XXVI. p. 26.

And when Macdonald's lips have quaffed.

The clan of the Macdonalds, kings of the Hebrides, is very ancient, and has possessed, during many centuries, the precedence of all others. "The Chieftain, or Phylarchae, of this tribe or clan, and from whom the principal men thereof are descended, according to Mr Welsh, and some other Irish writers, also some of our Seneciones or genea-

logists, about a century before Christ's nativity, was Coll to-named Vuais, who had two cousin-germans of the same name, they being, by three several sons, grand-children to Con Cen-chathach, or Constantine Centimachus, king of Ireland, so named from his fighting a hundred conflicts in his time against foreign invaders of his kingdom, and home-bred rebels, as the Irish history asserts. From these three Colls some of the most ancient of the clans deduce their descent; and as these are termed descendants of the Mileian stem, so they are also designed Clioehd-nan Colluibh, or the posterity of the Colls, in like manner as the Campbells are designed both Clanoduibhne and Siol Daumuid, the children of Duina, and progeny of Dermud, two of the most famed of their ancestors.

“ Col Vuais's son was called Gilebreid, as our histories name him Bredius. This Bredius, in the reign of King Ederus, about fifty-four years before Christ's nativity, with an^q army of his islanders, entered Morvern and the other western continent,

which having, with great barbarity, depopulated, he was, in return, met by King Ederus with an army, and entirely defeated. Bredius hardly escaping by absconding himself in a cave, was thence termed Bredius, or Gillebreid of the cave. However, after the king's departure he obtained new forces, by which he obliged the inhabitants of these parts to become his tributaries, in which he was not disturbed by King Ederus, then under some apprehension of an invasion by Julius Cæsar, who at that juncture had invaded the south parts of Britain.

“ Bredius's son was called Somerledus, from whom the chieftains of that clan were for some ages designed Macseirles, or Sumerledsons, as Richard Southwell, an English writer, in his account of the petty kings, or reguli of some of the British isles, while under the dominion of the Norwegian kings, asserts, who says that those reguli possess all the isles round Britain, at least Scotland, except those possessed by the sons of Sumerledus, being

most of our Ebudac, or western isles, then possest by the clan of Macdonalds.

“ Sumerled’s son was called Ranald ; Ranald’s son was called Donald, which name continued for several successive generations, and from which that clan obtained their denomination. —

—“ The chiefs or principal persons of this surname, as soon as the title of Thane came to be used, were among the first of our nobility dignified therewith, by the title, first of Thanes of the isles, and afterwards Thanes of Argyle.”—*Buch. Clans.*

Such is the origin ascribed to the Macdonalds by genealogists. They retained the sovereignty of the Isles till the reign of James III. of Scotland ; after which period they held their dominions of the Scottish crown, till the reign of James VI. who instigated several chieftains to join the Macleans against the Macdonalds ; a battle ensued, when the power of the latter was extinguished in the person of Sir James Macdonald. The pr^b perty was then trans-

ferred to the Campbells, in whose hands Ila, the ancient seat of government, yet remains.

The reader will perceive, from this specimen of Hebridean history, that almost any period of the reign of the Macdonalds is fair game for the poet. I have chosen one with which fiction may amuse itself with impunity; and at the same time screen itself with the mantle of history to cover its impositions.

St. XXVII. p. 27.

*We'll build us here our forest-bowers,
And twine them with the honey-flowers.
"I'll build thy hut, and bring thee home
The wild fowl and the honey-comb."*

O'Connor's Child.

CANTO. II.—St. I. p. 35.

*And like a sea-mew's snowy breast
Amid the tide's bewildering shene,*

Scarce known from the billow's starry crest,

The bark might yet be seen.

Mr Southey somewhere compares a boat to a

“ Sea-bird breasting the broad waves.”

St. XVII. p. 47.

And needed he in that wild mood,

To choose his footing well.—

The description beginning here, and terminating in St. XXVI. p. 54, is designed as a faithful picture of one of the sublimest scenes in the Hebrides, if any picture can be called faithful which is so far surpassed by the grandeur of the original. Those who have seen the most interesting parts of Mull, will perceive it to be copied from Innermore, in that island, a place which I visited in a cursory tour last harvest. Being struck with its wonderful sublimity, I could not resist the temptation of sketching my own progress and feelings in the person of

Owen. As I was without a guide, my situation may easily be conceived to resemble that which I have painted, only that I have thrown the shadows of night over the latter to heighten its effect.

If, by the introduction of this scene, I have added any beauty or interest to the poem, I am indebted for it to Mrs Maclean Clephane of Torloisk, as it was by her instructions that I visited Innermore. The same accomplished lady, whose name is sacred to travellers, is also entitled to my gratitude for many other valuable advices, designed to assist me in the execution of my romance. I am here tempted, at the same time, to record my obligations to Mr Walter Scott, as it was through his friendship that I obtained access to these distinguished advantages; and from him that I derived courage to persevere in an undertaking, on the presumption of which I had often reflected with terror and distrust.

St. XVIII. p. 50.

And now to flit his footing seemed

A deed of desperate suicide.

It was in this situation that I was struck with a peculiarity in the character of the natives, which I had deduced several times before from similar incidents:—I mean an insensibility to the grandeur of the scenes among which they are bred. A shepherd and his boy had seen me by accident, in what they conceived to be perilous circumstances, while I was pursuing my descent to the object of my journey, and concluding that I had lost my way, attempted to put me right, by a discourse which I did not comprehend; for we were ignorant of each other's dialect. One of them then scrambled down to me, and conducted me, by signs, to the top of a hill which I had just left. There they pointed out, with a kind of benevolent triumph, a safe and beaten road, leading to a gentleman's house at a considerable distance, supposing that I could have

no other destination, although they had found me within a few paces of reaching a scene, for a sight of which, any Lowlander of moderate enthusiasm would rejoice to have risked his ribs, if not his neck.

I may be permitted to relate another incident of the same nature, somewhat more ludicrous, though not less conclusive. Having gone in search of some remarkable coves, in another part of Mull, I requested some shepherds, who lived immediately beside them, to direct me how I should find them. One of the men, who did not know much English, on hearing me inquiring after *coves*, asked me, with a brightening countenance, if I was going to buy them; for he fancied I was speaking of *cows*. I varied my expression, and called them *caes*; upon which he only varied his reply, by proposing to sell me his *calves*. I tried many other signs and expressions, but never could succeed in communicating my desire, till an interpreter was brought, and

the difficulty explained. The idleness of my errand became then a greater mystery than the former ambiguity of my signs ; for a group of the shepherds followed me into the coves, watching my movements, as if they thought I must be searching for a gold mine, if I was searching for any thing at all. Perhaps, if I had told them that I was seeking for a lodging to two imaginary lovers, and had found a cove, with plenty of silver shells, blooming heather, honeysuckle, and ivy, to lodge them to their wish, they should have thought my errand idler than they did, when they fancied I had discovered nothing.

If these incidents which I have quoted may seem too trivial for supporting any general conclusion, the reader may be reminded that Staffa never was known as a curiosity, till about forty years ago, when it was discovered by a Mr Leach, an English gentleman, who communicated his discovery to Sir Joseph Banks, then on a voyage to Iceland. 'The

islanders are somewhat ashamed of this fact ; and make ample atonement for their former indifference, by the triumph with which they now conduct strangers to that magnificent island ; and the hospitality with which they entertain them while engaged in so gratifying a pursuit.

Yet the characters of those people have always been moulded by the very scenery which they have so little regarded ; for their heroism and intrepidity, in which they have excelled all other nations from time immemorial, is undoubtedly the result of those sublime operations of nature among which they are reared.

St. XXV. p. 56.

But now as if the dreamer lay,

In some enchanted land ;

Celestial sounds around him stray

As from a fairy band.

I have here taken the liberty of using a little

licence in respect to distances ; for I am afraid that the reader who is acquainted with the geography of Mull, will not believe that the bells of Icolmkill could be heard at Innermore. But I am not without illustrious precedents in such a poetical transgression.

St. XXVII. p. 59.

But he weened they came from the isle of Waves.

Iona, as derived by some etymologists from the Gaelic, signifies the Isle of Waves, expressive of the currents and breakers with which it is surrounded. It is derived by others from a Hebrew word, signifying a dove, in allusion to St Columba, the founder of its religious establishments.

St. XXVIII. p. 60.

These are friars that nightly repair,

At the midnight hour, to the house of prayer—

—*These are nuns that nightly adore,
The God of heaven on Iona's shore.*

The discipline of the religious in this island was very rigid. The regulations established by Columba, enjoined that the monks should “assemble thrice every night, and as often in the day. In every office of the day they were to use prayers and sing three psalms. In the offices of the night, from October to February, they were to sing thirty-six psalms and twelve anthems, at three several times: through the rest of the year twenty-one psalms, and eight anthems; but on Saturday and Sabbath nights twenty-five psalms, and as many anthems.” *Holstein, Cod. Regul. &c.* quoted by *Dr Smith*.

St. XXX. p. 61.

*And naked rocks were loosely thrown
On all the verdant vales of I.*

“I” is the name commonly given to this island by the natives. It is sounded like *ee* in English,

and signifies “The Island,”—implying its pre-eminence over all others.

St. XXX. p. 62.

Nor the bugloss flower.

This is the sea-bugloss, (*Pulmonaria maritima*, *Lin.*) which is very frequent on the shore of Iona. It has a beautiful purple flower and a fine glaucous leaf.

St. XXXI. p. 62.

*Kings, that have ruled in other climes,
Have doffed their robes, and shrieved their crimes,
And sought with penance, gifts, and prayer,
Asylum for their ashes there.*

The saints who lived and were buried in Iona, gave a sanctity to the ground, that rendered it a desirable place of interment to those who were solicitous about the repose of their ashes. But there was an ancient prophecy, which, in those supersti-

tious ages, might conduce more forcibly to the same end :

Seachd bliadna roimh'n bhraà

Thig muir thar Eirin re aon tra'

Sthar Ile ghu irm ghlaiss

Ach Snàmhaidh I Cholum clairich ;

implying, that “ seven years before the end of the world, a deluge shall drown the nations : the sea, at one tide, shall cover Ireland, and the green-headed Illy ; but Columba's isle shall swim above the flood.” See *Pennant*, and other writers.

The following is a specimen of the authority upon which the history of these royal interments is founded.

“ Into this sanctuary ther is three tombes of staine, formit like little chapels, with ane braid gray marble or quhín staine in the gavill of ilk ane of the tombes. In the staine of the ane tombe there is written in Latin letters, *Tumbus Regum Scotie*, that is, The tombe or grave of the Scots

kinges. Within this tombe, according to our
 Scotts and Erische cronickels ther layes forty-eight
 crowned Scotts kinges, through the quhilk this ile
 has been richlie dotat be the Scotts kings, as we
 have said. The tombe on the southe syde foresaid,
 has this inscription, *Tumulus Regum Hybernice*,
 that is, The tombe of the Irland kinges; for we
 have in our auld Erische cronickells, that ther
 wes foure Irland Kings eirdit in the said tombe.
 Upon the north syde of our Scotts tombe, the in-
 scriptione bears, *Tumulus Regum Norwægie*, that
 is, The tombe of the kings of Norroway; in the
 quhilk tombe, as we finde in our ancient Erische
 cronickells, ther layes eight kinges of Norroway,
 and als we find, in our Erische cronickells, that
 Coelus kinge of Norroway commandit his nobils to
 take his body and burey it in Colu-kill, if it chan-
 eit him to die in the isles; bot he was so discom-
 fitit, that ther remaine^d not so maney of his ar-
 mey as wad burey him ther; therefore he was eir-

dit in Kyle, after he stroke ane field against the Scotts, and was vanquishd be them. Within this sanctuary also lyes the maist pairt of the Lordies of iles, with their lynage, M^cKynnon and M^cGuare, with their lynages, with sundrie uthers inhabitants of the hail iles, becaus this sanctuary wes wont to be the sepulture of the best men of all the iles, and als of our kinges, as we have said ; because it was the maist honorable and ancient place that was in Scotland in thair days, as we reid." *Monro's Western Isles.*

St. XXXII. p. 63.

----- — *like a living chief*

With all his armour on -----

“ The families of Maclean of Duart, Lochbuy, and Coll, lie next all in armour as big as the life.”
Martin's Western Isles.

One of the Maclean's of Duart is represented bearing a shield and a two-handed sword.

St. XXXIV. p. 65.

Where Oran's martyr ashes lay.

This is that saint who accompanied Columba from Ireland, in quest of a new settlement, and assisted him in establishing the monastery in Iona. He was reputed the second in rank and dignity to the great patron of that order ; for on his expressing a desire that his body might be the first pledge to consecrate Iona, Columba granted his wish, by promising, that “ they who shall hereafter ask for my tomb, shall next inquire, Where is Oran’s ?” See *Odonell*, quoted by *Dr Smith*. This was done at a moment when Oran fancied himself dying after the manner of other men ; but a more glorious destiny awaited him ; for the erection of the chapel, which now bears his name, being opposed by demons, who overturned the walls as fast as they were built, it was pronounced by an angel that the work could not succeed, unless a human victim were sacrificed to counteract the operation of the

evil spirits; whereupon Oran embraced the opportunity of covering his memory with the glory of martyrdom, by permitting himself to be buried alive. His chapel was accordingly erected without further opposition, and remains to this day a monument of his piety.

But although St Oran has an undoubted right to the reputation of a martyr, his claims to that of a saint have been questioned; for, three days after his interment, St Columba, having caused his grave to be opened, with the desire of obtaining another view of his old companion, the impious corpse started up from its dungeon, and declared, that there was neither a hell nor a future judgment. St Columba, alarmed for the consequences of such a dangerous revelation, ordered the grave immediately to be closed, and the corpse of the martyr to be visited no more.

Yet the sanctity of Oran's life, and the piety of his death, have still preserved his reputation against

the profanity imputed to his ashes; for the promise of Columba is fulfilled; and the second tomb in Iona, for which the pilgrim inquires, is the *Reilig Ourain*.

St. XXXIV. p. 65.

Or mark the sacred cell that bore

Columba's dust, and not adore.

The character of St Columba needed not the visions and miracles recorded by monkish biographers to render it illustrious and venerable. They who knew that he founded the monastery of Icolmkill, in the middle of the sixth century, had already imbibed sufficient veneration for his name, without being told that his future glory was predicted to his mother, in her pregnancy, by an angel, in the emblem of a garment expanding over the heavens; or that a number of fishermen, fishing in Glen-Fende, were warned of his death by the vision of a pillar of fire, and a choir of angels

ascending with his soul to paradise. Nor was the same veneration any better promoted by painting his character as perfectly blameless, since such a personage can have no existence in nature, and consequently can only be treated as the creature of romance. Luckily, however, the zeal of these biographers has defeated itself, and some anecdotes which they have recorded to exalt his character, have, by their proper application, redeemed his memory from the charge of perfection; for it is evident that he was governed, in many instances, by human passions and weaknesses, like other mortals.

Among other infirmities, he imbibed such an antipathy to women, that he would not permit them to exist in the same island with himself, excluding also, on their account, sheep, goats, and cows; "because," said he, "wherever there are *cows* there must be *women*, and wherever there are *women* there must be *mischief*." For this rea-

son he confined the nuns, and the wives of the tradesmen who wrought for his monastery, to a barren rock at some distance, called *Women's Isle*. Of this injustice to the fair sex, however, he repented in his old age, when he felt himself approaching that paradise from which women are not excluded; and he admitted them at last into his own island, granting them a separate convent, at a more amicable distance from the monks. I do not know that he made any similar reparation for his severity towards his native country, for which he entertained so violent a hatred, that he vowed never to settle in any island within sight of it. Of the same violence of temper the poor family of *Clan-an-Oister* remained monuments till the days of Martin. How they had offended the saint is not known, but their punishment is certain.

“ There was a tribe here, called *Clan vic n'oster*, from *Ostiariz*, for they are said to have been porters. The tradition of these is, that before

Columbus died, thirty of this family lived then in *Iona*, and that upon some provocation *Columbus* entailed a curse upon them, which was, That they might all perish to the number of five, and that they might never exceed that number, to which they were accordingly reduced; and ever since, when any woman of the family was in labour, both she and the other four were afraid of death; for if the child that was to be then born, did not die, they say one of the five was sure to die; and this they affirm to have been verified on every such occasion, successively to this day. I found one only of this tribe living in the isle, and both he and the natives of this, and all the Western Isles, unanimously declare, that this observation never failed, and all this little family is now extinct, except this one poor man."—*Martin's West. Isles.*

Among another class of his acts, Dr Smith of Campbelton, (who was anxious that the romance-readers of his frivolous generation should try, for

once, how they could pass their time in reading a grave book,) has enumerated, after Cummin, Adomnan, and some others, that Columba, once in his life, put the crown on a king, but with so much reluctance, that he was only compelled to it by an angel, who flogged him so severely while he refused, that he retained the impression of the whip in his sides all the days of his life; that once, during a storm at sea, he laboured hard in oozing the boat with a bucket; that he saved a crane from perishing on its way from Ireland to Iona; that he prayed in his sleep;* and that he permitted his white horse to shed its tears on his bosom.†

* In this exercise of prayer, he had almost surpassed his cousin Baithen, who, according to the same biographers, would not allow the time that intervened between his swallowing two morsels of meat, or between his reaping a handful of corn, and putting it in the sheaf, to pass without putting up an ejaculation to heaven.

† The attachment of horses to these saints was very remarkable. St Ciaran “had an old horse which used to

Such is the mass of wonder and absurdity with which biographers have attempted to embellish the character of St Columba, whose introduction of the Christian religion into Scotland, was singly sufficient to procure him the gratitude and veneration of posterity.

St. XLIV. p. 74.

*Her own pale bust she seemed to be,
Stamped with eternal harmony.*

“ Awhile she stood,
Transformed by grief to marble, and appeared
Her own pale monument.”

Fenton's Mariamne.

beg for him, and bring to his cave whatever the charity of the well-disposed in the neighbourhood had put in his panniers. One day a wicked fellow put out the poor horse's eyes, in consequence of which he lost his way, fell over a rock, and perished. Next day, the culprit was stung by a serpent, and his life despaired of; upon which the saint being called, prayed for him and applied unguents, by which his life was saved, but with the loss of his eye-sight.”
Colgan, quoted by *Dr Smith*.

CANTO III.—St. V. p. 89.

Schooling amidst their fearful jars,

Her proud Macleans for future wars.

About nine-tenths of the inhabitants of Mull are Macleans. They have been famous for heroism from time immemorial. “This brave and heroic surname,” says Buchanan, in his history of the clans, “is originally descended from that of Fitzgerald in Ireland, being once the most potent surname of any other of English extract in that kingdom. Speed, and other English historians, derive the genealogy of the Fitzgeralds from Scignior Giraldo, a principal officer under William the Conqueror, at his conquest of England, anno 1066.”

St. VI. p. 90.

Fox deaf to faithful lover's prayer,

The Cory-Vreckan meets thee there.

“Between the north end of Jura, and the Isle Scarba, lies the famous and dangerous gulph called

Cory Vreckan, about a mile in breadth ; it yields an impetuous current, not to be matched any where about the Isle of Britain. The sea begins to boil and ferment with the tide of flood, and resembles the boiling of a pot, and then increases gradually, until it appear in many whirlpools which form themselves in sort of pyramids, and immediately after spout up as high as the mast of a little vessel, and at the same time makes a loud report. These white waves run two leagues with the wind before they break ; the sea continues to repeat these various motions from the beginning of the tide of flood, until it is more than half flood, and then it decreases gradually, until it hath ebb'd about half an hour, and continues to boil till it is within an hour of low water. This boiling of the sea is not above a pistol shot distant from the coast of Scarba Isle, where the white waves meet and spout up ; they call it the *Kaillach*, i. e. an old Hag ; and they say, that when she puts on her

Kerchief, i. e. the whitest waves, it is then reckoned fatal to approach her."—*Martin's West. Isles*. "Betwixt thir twa iyles ther runnes ane streame, above the power of all sailing and rowing, with infinite danger, callit Corybrekan. This streame is aught myle lang, quhilk may not be hontet bot be certain tyds."—*Monro's West. Isles*.

This gulf has its name from Brekin or Vreckan, a Prince of Denmark, who, to prove his affection for his mistress, vowed to encounter the old Hag when her *kerchief* was on, if the lady would marry him on his return. He perished in the attempt. St Columba was more fortunate. "Being once, for instance, overtaken by a tempest in the dangerous gulf of Coirevrecain, and in great danger of being lost, he told those who were with him, that he relied more on the intercession of his friend St Kenneth, for obtaining deliverance on that occasion, than on his own prayers. Kenneth knew that his friend was then at sea, (as he probably let

him know of it, in order to have the benefit of his intercession), and observing the tempest coming on just as he was sitting down to his meat, cried, "it is not the time to eat when Columba is in danger ;" and flew to the church in such haste, that though he had but one of his slippers on, he would not wait to put his foot in the other. This was about the ninth hour ; and very soon after, the tempest abated ; which made Columba afterwards say, that they were obliged to Kenneth for not waiting for his shoes."—*Adam.* quoted by *Dr Smith.*

The captain of a vessel, whose name I cannot at present remember, lately bribed his men to attempt the navigation of this gulf. They succeeded, but with so much difficulty, that they were compelled to throw all their barrels overboard to check the rapidity of the whirl ; for as soon as they got into the middle of the gulf, their vessel was driven round like a spinning-top.

St. VII.—p. 71.

Or Guillemots obscure the sky.

The black guillemots (*Colymbus Grylle, Lin.*) fly about the Hebrides in large flocks.

St. IX. p. 79.

He saw the tints of setting day

Upon that hallowed mount decay,

Which St Columba climbed of yore.—

Oronsay was the first island on which Columba landed after his departure from Ireland, and finding that his native country was visible from the top of one of its hills, he abandoned it.

St. X.—p. 93.

As on by dark Bird island's rock.

This is a black rock in the neighbourhood of Oronsay, surrounded with terrible eddies, and frequented by a variety of fowls, from which it has its name.

St. X.—p. 94.

And colke depluming its own breast.

The colke, or Eider-duck, (*Anas mollissima*, *Lin.*) plucks the feathers from its breast in hatching-time, and hence Monro has said, “ At that time her fleiche of fedderis falleth off her haily, and sayles to the mayne sea agayne, and never comes to land quhilk the zeir end agayne, and then she comes with her new fleiche of fedderis: this fleiche that she leaves yeirly upon her nest, hes nae pens in the fedderis, but utter fine downes.”

The down of this bird is of considerable value.

St. XI.—p. 94.

The bark has reached St Oran's strand.

Oronsay has its name from St Oran, the companion of Columba. “ North from Hlay lies ane iyle callit Oransay, it is twa myle lange, and neire alls mikell in breidth, quherin ther is ane monastery of chanons, mayne laiche land full of hairs and

foulmerts, with convenient havens for Heyland galeys, and shald at the shores. It lays eight myles of sea north from Isla.”—*Monro’s West. Isles.*

St. XXIV. p. 106.

A Christian cross beside them stood,

Funereal as their mournful mood.

“About a quarter of a mile on the *south side* the church, there is a carne, in which there is a stone cross fixed, called *Macduffie’s Cross*, for when any of the heads of the family were to be interr’d, their corps was laid on this cross for some moments, in their way toward the church.”—*Martin’s West. Isles.*

There are several other crosses in the same island.

St. XLVI. p. 126.

The convent of our saint is nigh.

The ancient monastery of Oronsay may be considered as next in interest to that of Iona. It was

founded by the same saint, and inhabited by canons of the same order. The ruins yet remain to a considerable extent, and give an interest to the island, which it could not otherwise have claimed.

St. XLVI. p. 126.

For I have heard the goylir's cry.

The goylir, according to the opinion of the natives foretells a storm. "When any number of these fowls are seen together, its concluded to be an undoubted sign of an approaching storm, and when the storm ceases, they disappear under the water; the seamen call them *Malifgies* from *Mali-effigies*, which they often find to be true."—*Martin's West. Isles.*

St. XLVI. p. 126.

And the rain-geese singing dolefully.

"The Rain-geese, or Red-throated Diver, (*Colymbus septentrionalis*, *Lin.*) according to the popular belief of the islanders, prognosticates rain.

CANTO IV.—St. II. p. 132.

*The little lake that proudly plays,
Around the isle of Finlagan,
And the palace of Macdonald's clan.*

Finlagan is a small island in a lake of the same name in Isla. It was here that the king of the isles resided, in all the pomp and splendour of royalty. Some traces of their palace yet remain. “The isle *Finlagan*, from which this lake hath its name, is in it. It is famous for being once the court in which the great *Macdonald*, king of the isles had his residence ; his house, chapel, &c. are now ruinous. His guards *de corps* called *sucht-tach* kept guard on the lake side, nearest to the isle ; the walls of their houses are still to be seen there.”—*Martin's West. Isles.*

St. VI. p. 136.

*But in the sage's fiantic face,
She traced a secr's f'ight.*

“ At the sight of a vision the eye-lids of the person are erected, and the eyes continue staring until the object vanish. This is obvious to others who are by when the persons happen to see a vision, and occurred more than once to my own observation, and to others that were with me.”—

Martin's West. Isles.

St. VI. p. 136.

And talked of battles and of shrouds.

“ When a shroud is perceived about one, it is a sure prognostic of death, the time is judged according to the height of it about the person.”—*Mart.*

St. VI. p. 136.

She saw his eye-ball's starting strain.

“ There is one, (a seer) in *Shie*, of whom his acquaintance observed, that when he sees a vision, the inner part of his eyelids turn so far upwards, that after the object disappears, he must draw them

down with his fingers, and sometimes employ others to draw them down, which he finds to be the much easier way."—*Martin's West. Isles.*

St. XI. p. 140.

But dubious in those treacherous times,

Were peace, and truce, and plighted word.

Those who are acquainted with the manners of the Hebrideans, between the sixth and the sixteenth centuries, will not accuse me of doing them injustice; for their hospitality and valour were too often tarnished by treachery and massacre. I have rather softened, for the purposes of poetry, the dreadful picture which those times exhibit. To convince my readers of this fact, I need only refer them to a book entitled the *History of the Feuds of the Clans*, written in the time of King James VI.

St. XI. p. 141.

And freely quaff from silver shells,

The juice of the grape and the heather belts.

The islanders had formerly the art of distilling an intoxicating liquor from heather, which is now lost. Their custom of drinking from shells is well known. They enjoyed the shell with a hospitality peculiar to themselves. “The manner of drinking used by the chief men of the Isles, is called in their language *Streach*, i. e. a *round*, for the company sat in a circle, the cup-bearer filled the drink round to them, and all was drunk out, whatever the liquor was, whether strong or weak; they continued drinking sometimes twenty-four, sometimes forty-eight hours: It was reckoned a piece of manhood to drink until they became drunk, and there were two men with a barrow attending punctually on such occasions. They stood at the door until some became drunk, and they carried them upon the barrow to bed, and returned again to their

post as long as any continued fresh, and so carried off the whole company one by one as they became drunk.”—*Martin's West. Isles.*

Nor was their hospitality in the previous part of the feast less remarkable; “for this custom the islanders have, that when one is invited to another’s house, they never depart so long as any provision doth last, and when that is done, they go to the next, and so from one to one, until they make a round from neighbour to neighbour, still carrying the master of the former family with them to the next house.”—*Feuds of the Clans.*

St. XII. p. 42.

For Kernes and Gilliglasses true.—

The *Gilliglasses* (signifying grim-looking men) were the military of the isles, who fought with sharp hatchets, or Lochaber axes.

Shakespeare speaks of them in the following lines :

“ ——— From the Western Isles
Of *Kernes* and *Gallow-glasses* was supplied.

St. XV. p. 144.

But leave behind for courtesy

Thy Carnach.

The *Carnach* (signifying strong men) were light-armed, and fought with darts and daggers, and sometimes with bows and arrows.

St. XVII. p. 147.

Bespangled o'er with sparkling hues—

The ancient dress of the Hebrideans was very splendid. “ The ancient dress wore by the women called *Arisad*, is a white plade, having a few small stripes of black, blew, and red ; it reached from the neck to the heels, and was tied before on the breast, with a buckle of silver or brass, according to the quality of the person. I have seen some of the former of an hundred marks value ; it was broad as any ordinary pewter plate, the whole curiously en-

graven with curious animals, &c. There was a lesser buckle which was wore in the middle of the larger, and above two ounces weight; it had in the centre a large piece of crystal, or some finer stone, and this was set all round with several finer stones of a lesser size.

“ The *Plade* being pleated all round, was tied with a belt below the breast; the belt was of leather, and several pieces of silver intermix'd with the leather like a chain. The lower end of the belt has a piece of plate about eight inches long, and three in breadth, curiously engraven; the end of which was adorned with fine stones, or pieces of red corral. They wore sleeves of scarlet cloth, closed at the end as men's vests, with gold lace round 'em, having plate buttons set with fine stones. The head-dress was a fine *Kerchief* of linen straight about the head, hanging down the back taper-wise; a large lock of hair hanging down their cheeks above their breast, the lower end tied round with a knot of ribbands.”

—*Martin's West Isles.*

The arisaide was not always of the pattern described by Martin. One, which I had the fortune to see in Mull, was composed of silk tartan. Like most other dresses, it looks elegant on an elegant woman ; yet the Hebridean ladies need not regret that their ancestors have abandoned it for the fashions of the south.

NOTES TO THE MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

HOLM-GLEN.—P. 179.

Burns said of this glen, that it was sufficient to make a poet of a blockhead.

P. 188.

*Among the Scots that sought the Holy War,
The best and bravest went with Lochinvar.*

The Gordons, who afterwards became Viscounts of Kenmore, were anciently knights of Lochinvar.

P. 198.

*For it was found upon Dalarran's plain,
Staid by the tombstone of a royal Dane,*

*Who there beside the Ken's empurpled wave,
Had fought for empire and had found a grave.*

On the plain of Dalarran there is a tall stone set upon one end, in the manner of a monument, but without any inscription, which has stood there from time immemorial. A great many human bones have lately been dug from the adjoining ground, and it is agreed by the antiquarians of that country, that a battle was fought there by the Danes, and that the stone is a monument erected to the memory of their king, who perished in the conflict.

P. 201.

*Hears the soft tones of music round him flow,
Winding the mazes of the dell below.*

The inhabitants of the neighbouring villages affirm, that the most beautiful music is frequently heard, at night, in the Holm-glen, composed of the tones of many instruments, but chiefly resembling those of the flute and the harp. I have already accounted for this fact in poetry; if I were obliged to explain it in prose, I should attribute the music

to the natural construction of the glen, which from its depth, its streams, its woods, and its sudden windings, may be considered as a kind of musical instrument for the zephyrs to play upon.

THE TWO WOODS.—P. 203.

The scene of this poem, as well as of the preceding, lies in a beautiful valley of the Glen-kens in Galloway. It was there I spent those days of which the pains are soonest forgotten, and the pleasures are longest remembered. It will, therefore, be readily believed, that I have not written this eclogue without some affection for the people whose situation it describes.

P. 215.

*To my retreats they came, when from the earth,
Their crows had dug the secret of her birth.*

An ingenious Baronet lately discovered on Lowran hill, what he fancied a confirmation of the Huttonian Theory. Lowran has since become the resort of the contending Theorists.

P. 232.

His lease again exposed to public sale.

The system of letting lands to the highest bidder, at a public roup, is equally unprofitable to the landlord, and injurious to the tenantry. He that bids highest for a lease, is generally the worst tenant, and while he displaces the honest peasant from his farm, he defrauds the proprietor of his rent. The wisest landlord chooses the best man for his tenant, and if his rents are smaller, they are better paid.

TO CHLOE. *In the manner of Shakespeare*, p. 254.

The reader who is acquainted with the *Venus and Adonis* of Shakespeare, will perceive it to be the style of that luxurious poem which is here designed to be imitated.

THE END.

